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ELEUSINIA.

BOOK I.

CHILDHOOD.

I.

IT is not I would flatter thee or thine,
Nor yet myself that I would fain display,
MIALMA, that I pen this opening line
And dedicate to thee my thoughtful lay :
It were poor chivalry, methinks, to shine
In letter'd lists, and point th' undangerous quill.
But 'tis that I would blend thy thoughts with mine ;
If chords, which vibrate in my bosom still,
Shall wake perchance in thine a sympathetic thrill.

II.

To be ! to be and live ! and living hold
First rank in this terrene economy !
First—tho' of like dull dross and vulgar mould ;
Yet stamp'd with character of finer die,
And dash'd with particle of purest gold !
To be and live ! What is it ? Could we look
On Truth not veil'd in doubt, and quite unfold
With mortal hand each page of Nature's book,
How lightly might we learn this weight of flesh to brook !

III.

There have been moments of my sojourn here,
When I would doff the fetters that enthrall
My soul within the precincts of this sphere,
And mix me with the universal All :
Then has my spirit hurried me to peer
At things unseen, beyond imagining ;
But I have shrunk within myself for fear,
And shudder'd at the desperate venturing :
Then turn'd to hug the hope which Faith alone can bring.

IV.

Still in our aspirations to be wise
We glean a something of th' eternal Truth ;
The scatter'd pittance, that ungarner'd lies
Within our sense, our yearning souls will soothe ;
As some star cheers the sea-lost sailor's eyes,
By long laborious watching spied at last
'Twixt opening clouds that all obscured the skies :
Enough—he tacks before the veering blast,
Ere daybreak nears the land, and laughs at dangers past.

V.

What, if in fantasy we wander far
Beyond our reason's little boundary ?
'Tis a sweet wandering : and who would mar
One joy that brightens sad reality ;
All empty tho' it be as meteor-star
Flashing athwart the moonless firmament ?
Happier the child that runs to pluck a bar
From the void rainbow, than who mopes content
In ignorance, or stares in idle wonderment !

VI.

Then let us wander still ; nor whither care,
Secure of our return, tho' devious
As eagle soaring down the pathless air.
Heaven, Earth and Ocean join to welcome us
With all their native beauties, free as fair,
Could we but only see what lies in view,
Amid this chaos of diurnal care.
Imagination shall befriend us too
To paint the living scene—or e'en create a new.—

VII.

Bound on a narrow speck in endless space
For one short moment of eternity,
MAN peeps about to mark his time and place ;
With forecast now, and now reverted eye
His path thro' Being's infinite to trace.
Whence came he ? whither shall he go ? He pines
To read the secret story of his race ;
And struggles with the twilight, till declines
The glimmering lamp of life, and blots his fair designs.

VIII.

What learns he of himself—but that he is?
The rest is all conjecture, false or true :
He moves a compound of strange essences,
Of spiritual and earthy, old and new,
Eternal and corruptible! and this
Its own free monarch ; but by reasoning soul
And carnal wish so drawn at contraries,
That still he wavers doubtful of control,
Mistrusting of the prize ere yet he turns the goal !

IX.

He crawls into the light—a thing of earth ;
Without a thought of being's loss or gain ;
Nor conscious of the pang that gave him birth.
Insensate yet to pleasure or to pain
He heard but heeded not, in feeling's dearth,
The shriek of agony, which like a dart
Thrill'd thro' each breast, and let all pity forth :
Nor mark'd th' o'erflowings of a father's heart,
While on his arm he danced his first love's counterpart.

X.

Look on his nerveless limb, his senseless eye,
His shapeless visage void of reason's grace !
Is this a plant of immortality,
That may outgrow the bounds of time and place ?
Where here is Man's far-vaunted dignity,
That claims to lord it o'er the brute domain ?
There's not a reptile beast, or shadowy fly,
There's not a puny fish in all the main,
So powerless of limb, so purposeless of brain !

XI.

Hide him—the passing breeze that curls the lake
Would chill his sap, and blight his tender bud !
Hide him—the sun's most genial ray would bake
His root, and dry the fountain of his blood !
Where in the wide world shall he refuge take ?
There is one refuge welcomest and best,
We cannot quite forget ; but still would make
In gratitude the seat of love and rest,
Whence our first draught of life we drew—kind woman's
breast !

XII.

Fair temple ! where the infant votary
Finds health and vigour, the mature repose ;
Stretch'd at thy shrine in fond idolatry,
A calm forgetfulness of human woes
Steals o'er our senses, and before our eye
A vision, as of Heaven, would pourtray
Scenes of high thought and holy sympathy.
Say, O ye pure who here have enter'd—say
Did ever spot like this redeem life's dreary way ?

XIII.

Here the fond mother laps her puling brat,
And counts each little pulse that plays the while ;
And every whimper inarticulate
She answers with a sweet maternal smile :
Now, as in converse, holds alternate chat,
And reads assent in his unmeaning eye ;
Now on his cheek with gentle finger'd pat
She tempts a laugh, or stills his pettish cry
With many a balmy kiss and many a soothing sigh.

XIV.

So let us ponder o'er that tender care,
Whose delicate characters are all effaced
From our worn memory, if ever there
Young Gratitude its first emotions traced :
But from our hearts nor Time nor Fate can wear
That consciousness which kindles at the name
Of her the burden of our birth who bare :
Albeit we knew her never—not by fame,
Still at our bosoms lurks the gently-smouldering flame.

XV.

And thou—blest Spirit ! who wast call'd so soon
To quit thy fragile tenement of earth ;
Thou that for me didst bring this dangerous boon ;
Can I forget thy bounty of my birth ?
What—tho' my ears scarce learn'd thy lisping tone ;
What—tho' my silly eyes scarce knew thy smile ;
What—tho' thy name my lips were taught to shun
As word of woe ; do I not love thee still ?
Witness the tear that blots this page beneath my quill.

XVI.

Ah me ! how vast, how various is the debt,
How bankrupt is the debtor ! still, methinks,
Just Providence, thou would'st not quite forget
The recompense : Mark, while yon nursling drinks
From life's full spring, where every sweet is met ;
Till slumber stays his sense of luxury,
If not in placid dreams protracted yet ;
The joy that lightens in his mother's eye
Proclaims the bursting warmth of her heart's sympathy.

XVII.

Where Guadalquiver pours his crystal flood,
The lovely Rosafresca once abode ;
At whose young heart a stream of Moorish blood
Throbb'd treason to the staid duenna's code :
For she had learn'd to love in wayward mood ;
And pored in secret o'er the philtred page :
Her's was, in sooth, no soul of clay, that could
Endure the moulding of officious age,
But like a captive bird she loathed her gilded cage ;

XVIII.

And to the mountains fain had fled away,
Despite of goodly house and orange-grove,
And every sweet that could invite her stay :
For straiten'd liberty and thwarted love
Will mar a Paradise, tho' e'er so gay ;
And bars and bolts are weak to chain the mind.
So it befel, on an auspicious day,
Love whisper'd flight, and Chance for once was kind ;
While nodding Jealousy fell distanced far behind.

XIX.

And now she wander'd o'er the wide, wide earth,
Alone !—save one—but he was all in all ;
The young Alphonso ! he of peerless worth !
'Twas for his love she left her father's hall,
And wreck'd the hope that smiled upon her birth,
The hope of heritage, so fondly fed
By carnal souls in dread of carnal dearth.
But friends and heritage, by passion sped,
She deem'd a paltry price to win Alphonso's bed.

XX.

Tis said the unwedded girl is like the rose
That buds and blossoms on its native stem ;
Which the fond gardener trains and nurses close,
Of all his flowers this the fairest gem ;
The youths and maidens watch it as it blows,
And long to wear it on a holiday.
But tear it from the stalk whereon it grows,
Nor youth nor maiden heeds it from that day,
Unless it be to mark its beauty fade away.

XXI.

But wherefore do I loiter in my tale ?
They fled the land of citrons and of palms,
Its fairy landscape and its perfumed gale,
Where Memory sweeten'd even Nature's balms,
And hid them in a far sequester'd vale ;
Unknown, unnamed, unhonour'd as before :
Honour and name they held of light avail,
While from the cup that each for each did pour
They quaff'd rich draughts of love, and thirsted still the
more.

XXII.

But scarce three moons had waned when, as his mood
Inclined him at the purple dawn of day,
Alphonso hied to cool his feverish blood
In the fresh mountain-stream's delicious spray.
At eve, while musing on its brink he stood,
The gliding water kiss'd the grassy side :
Now, as in anger, dash'd a foaming flood.
He plunged regardless—but th' indignant tide
Burst in upon his soul : he struggled, sunk, and died.

XXIII.

Ye that have fondly watch'd the fleeting life
Of some dear object—parent, spouse, or friend,
While native passion in your breasts was rife ;
And o'er the falling visage chanced to bend,
Just as its spirit 'scaped from mortal strife ;
Then have ye felt a pang I fain would tell ;
A heart-ache that might welcome sword or knife :
But our tongues falter, and our bosoms swell,
When Memory drags us back to what we loved so well.

XXIV.

And Rosafresca hugg'd the lifeless clay,
Incredulous of death, tho' passing plain;
Then wept:—and if a sea of tears could stay
Necessity, she had not wept in vain.
But tears nor prayers can rescue from decay:
So forth they bore him to the cypress-glade,
And gave him to the soil: and each sad day,
At morn—at noon—at eve—the widow'd maid,
Bent o'er the fresh-piled sod, invoked his slumbering
shade.

XXV.

But while she call'd on Death disconsolate,
A mother's pang gave hope of mother's joy:
At once she seem'd a thing regenerate;
Cognate, coeval with her baby boy!
No longer at the lonely grave she sat,
No longer toil'd at the dull ear of Death;
But in her rapture bless'd benignant Fate,
Admired her little pride draw life's first breath,
And praised the all-skilful Hand which nature fashioneth.

XXVI.

His tender limbs she wrapp'd in softest vest,
And at her bosom fenced him from the world.
There while he hung, and press'd with infant zest,
As o'er the fount of life his bright lip curl'd,
What new-lit joyance kindled in her breast ! [play'd;
Sweet were the scenes where once her childhood
Sweet was the love of those she loved the best :
These sweets, alas ! were spent—a tribute paid
To Folly or to Fate ; by all, tho' scorn'd, obey'd.

XXVII.

But now young Joy, despite of cumbrous woe,
Rose like the giant lustier from his fall :
Dear was her home—sire—spouse : what, were it so ?
Dearer than home, than sire, than spouse, than all,
Train'd to her heart this little fruit did grow.
Oh should her spirit in some favour'd spot
Still linger on embodied here below,
Haply this tale may wake an absent thought
On one who loved her well, and has not yet forgot.

XXVIII.

Of this enough—and more. But now to trace
With philosophic eye the mazy path
By which the novice man begins this race
Whose perfect prize we ken not : tho' it hath
Such earnest interspersed in mediate place,
As tells 'tis worth the winning. Why this taste
Of pleasure and of pain? This hope of grace ;
This dread of punishment? If all in waste
We hope and fear and feel—such thought I would my
last.

XXIX.

For who so dull of soul, of will so mean,
As day by day to pace life's weary rounds,
Warding intrusive ills in silent spleen,
Like sentinel within the castle-bounds ;
From kindred dust to guard his body clean ;
To eat, to drink, to sleep, to rise, to spin
On Learning's wheel the many-tangled skein ;
But that a still small whisper breathes within—
On, on ! Heaven lies beyond ; and Heaven is thine to win !

XXX.

When first within the jealous womb secrete
Rare purple veins distain the pearly lymph,
And the soft filmy membrane unreplete
Assumes a headlike form, the restless nymph
Distemper'd feels a strange emotion fleet
Athwart her reins, and sighing bodes of woe.
Then glides anon into its embryo seat
Some living soul, still doom'd to dwell below,
And work its upward way, till it may wisdom know.

XXXI.

For think I dare not, the Creator-Power,
Who blends all justice with omnipotence,
Would thus invest my soul, at its *first* hour,
With all these capabilities of sense,
Above each beast and bird and tree and flower,
To gather knowledge; with this faculty
To winnow good from evil, and to store
Within the garner of my memory
Fit nutriment of thought against futurity.

XXXII.

For what had I of merit they had not ?
That I should perch at once on this high grade ;
Whence I look down upon th' unequal lot
Of every living thing that God hath made
To work its doom on this terrestrial spot,
In pity or in pride :—if not that I
Have clomb by just degrees ? But this is what
I can not predicate ;—nor thou deny,
Though thou mayst scorn the thought, as idle fantasy.

XXXIII.

I know that thou hast heard that Master's scheme,
Who planted Wisdom on Italia's shore ;
It may be thou hast mock'd, for brain-born dream,
What many a flippant wit has mock'd before :
Nor to thine eyes would I presumptuous seem ;
Yet he had fathom'd Learning's dense profound ;
Exhausted thought on Wisdom's curious theme ;
Had sipt each honied flower, flitting round
O'er distant fields, where most sweet science might
abound.

XXXIV.

Thus taught the Bard, and thought to teach aright:—
'Scaped from Life's central fire, a vital spark
Begins its several being : swift as light
Shot thro' the void immeasurable dark,
The spirit wings its momentary flight,
To animate some fit material mass ;
May be, a tiny gnat, or atom mite ;
Or if shape organized the vast world has
Of lower faculty to gather Wisdom's ways.

XXXV.

But Change awaits all matter ; and the hand
Which forms, itself dissolves, itself again
To renovate what may not longer stand.
Thus, in a few short hours, no signs remain
Of what so late obey'd a soul's command,
But dust—disorgan'd dust ; incapable
To move an agent. But th' uniting band
Is broken ; and the subtle particle
Of Heaven is flitted off, as by a magic spell ;

XXXVI.

And, drawn by some more strong affinity,
Where may be welcome enters : so that essence
We call electric darts athwart the sky
From cloud to cloud, swift to regain quiescence.
And if, with petty sense of mite or fly,
It hath gain'd aught of Wisdom, now it hies
To a worthier mansion, of capacity
Adapt ; which let it still economize,
And still it may aspire in being's scale to rise.

XXXVII.

But should it falter in the steep ascent,
In impotence of purpose or of power,
Down—down it tumbles, in a moment sent
Thro' regions hardly pass'd in many an hour :
Damn'd to some hateful misshaped tenement,
Of foul proportion and low faculties ;
Where in its upward course no Soul e'er spent
A profitless hour : but thither now it flies
Powerless in shame ; once more till it may dare to rise.

XXXVIII.

Say—had it reach'd the form erect of Man,
Furnish'd with sense of reason, and endow'd
With power the ends of good and ill to scan?
Thence might it almost mark its future road;
Might dare to contemplate the wondrous plan
Of its Creator, soaring in high thought!
But woe to him that will not while he can;
Who loiters when the prey is well nigh caught;
Who, false of heart—and head, will barter all for nought!

XXXIX.

Fashion'd to gaze on Heaven, he gropes about
Bent o'er the miry soil—as Alchemist
Pores o'er his crucible; as if from out
Brute marl to gather treasure. Then, dismiss'd
By death, the Soul falls backward in its route;
Degraded some curst flesh to animate
Of villain fox, or swine, or wolf, or goat,
Or ape half conscious of his loathsome state,
Who seems to mimic man and warn him of his fate.

XL.

Still of necessity the journey lost
Must be retrieved, albeit in weariness.
Oh ! how I tremble while I count the cost,
The travailing ghost's enduring deep distress !
At length the Soul, by much distraction toss'd,
Shall merge in the vast Source from whence it sprung--
The First and Last ; of Heaven's eternal Host
An increment, no longer to be wrung
With pains of mortal flesh—vile load of dust, of dung !

XLI.

So mounts aloft, from Ocean's depth unbound,
A watery particle sublimed in air,
With the elements to mingle which compound
The invisible universe, and wander there :
Now in the rapid whirlwind hurried round ;
Now breathing freshness o'er the fertile plain ;
Now still as death ; now trembling in high sound ;
Now seem to float in vapour : till again
Condensed to watery drop it joins the parent Main.

XLII.

Such was the scheme the stranger-poet taught :
The eternal essence of the living soul ;
A pilgrim in the flesh with sorrow fraught ;
An emanation from that Infinite Whole,
Whence all life always radiates, but nought
Diminishes ; a spiritual sojourner
In various tenements of matter wrought,
Held in succession ; held in trust, to rear
Therein a plant of heaven, till heavenward it shall bear !

XLIII.

O that so false should be what seems so fair !
For false I needs must write it. Yet it was
A splendid error ! Other such there were,
By which Philosophers of ancient days
Would steal into the skies, and revel there
In lofty thought : those giant spirits of yore,
Alone, unaided, dared to raise in th' air
A cumbrous pile of doctrine and hard lore,
By which to scale high Heaven and batten on its store !

XLIV.

Far other they, that suicidal crew,
Who would extinguish life's eternal fire,
With the flesh douting it ; as if it drew
From thence its nutriment, and must require,
Like the gross lamp to be supplied anew ;
To drink, or die for ever ! Ponder well
The soul that quickens thee : its workings view ;
Its fears, its aspirations, and the swell
Of passionate thought—the tide that in thy mind doth
 dwell :

XLV.

Now gently rippled in the noonday sun ;
Now heaving thro' the Universe, and dashing
With troubled breakers where it may not run,
As if to reach e'en there with foam and splashing !
Is this a thing of matter, waiting on
The mass you call your body ? Which the while
Drags on so heavily : and eats anon,
Or sleeps, its weary being to beguile ; [vile !
Poor slave of Time and Place, condemn'd to drudgeries

XLVI.

Were it not tedious, I could expound
The wisdom of philosophers who sift
Rare truths by handicraft, and so have found
The subtleties of matter : how bereft
Of vivifying spirit it lies bound
In inactivity, inertly strong,
Self-impotent of motion : whence redound
Tidings of virtues, that to flesh belong,
Virtues which still shall move th' unbodied hosts among.—

XLVII.

Be as it may the fearful mystery,
Where no life was, life enters : this is sure :
Whether a pre-existent entity,
A several soul renascent ; or a pure,
New-wrought creation, that shall never die
Tho' yet unlearn'd in living ; or a flame
Lit at its parent's lamp in charity ;
Or some celestial essence, still the same,
Pervading space, unseen, unheard, without a name,

XLVIII.

At whose prolific touch young Nature teems,
With life omnigenous impregnated,
And straining for the birth : now on day's beams
The subtle fluid glides into her bed ;
Or floats into her lap in pearly streams
Of soft-descending rain, the dormant seed
Waking to vegetation : now redeems
The animated world to death decreed,
Waiting where love, or lust, provokes the genial deed.

XLIX.

A senseless babble grates upon my ear ;
Like random notes upon a tuneless lyre !
It is a new-born infant's voice I hear :
See ! there he lies, wrapt in his first attire ;
And stares upon the light and cries for fear.
Poor innocent ! It is a fearful thing,
From still deep darkness to be cast up here !
To wake from rest to daily travailing !
To come a guest—perchance no kind wish welcoming !

L.

It is indeed a fearful thing, to start
At once into this rare cross-purposed world ;
Where men are strown like toys at fancy-mart,
In strange incongruous groups, together hurl'd
Spite of themselves who fain would hold apart !
Gay, grave, poor, proud — Nay, he would laugh aloud,
But for a numbness of his head and heart,
To view the fooleries of this motley crowd ;
To see the suits men don betwixt their swath and shroud !

LI.

But blank as now this page that waits my pen
Is that child's conscience : one by one he marks
The things that lie around, with listless ken ;
But his young thoughts just flash and die like sparks
Struck from the cold flint : But a train hath been
Forelaid, to lead their glimmer on to light.
For still he sees, and sees and marks agen :
Till soon an image grows upon his sight,
A thing of shape and size, which his eye knows aright.

LII.

Next wrap his eye in darkness ;—even still
The self-same image dances in his view :
Or snatch it from his presence ;—yet at will
He can call up the shade of what he knew.
But whence this phantom ? What this wizard skill,
That can conjure an unreal shadowy form
To rise upon the darkness, and instil
On his cold sense a token bright and warm ;
Like beacon spied afar amid the murky storm ?

LIII.

Whence springs this consciousness that something is ?
'Tis planted in the garden of his mind—
A young idea ; in goodly soil I wis,
Where thousand others after-root may find ;
And on each thousand, thousand more may rise,
Grafted with curious culture ; and perchance
Mount shoot on shoot and spire into the skies.
O think to prune their young luxuriance,
Lest thou may'st rue too late their wild extravagance :

LIV.

For soon thy chastening hook they will defy,
Toughen'd by age or towering from thy reach.
Hark ! That monotonous and senseless cry
Still grates upon my ear ! It bids me teach
My mind to ponder o'er the infancy
Of its own being, ere these limbs had learn'd
To feel the fulness of its mastery,
And each day's wants in magic fetters earn'd :
Before one fear, one hope within this bosom yearn'd.

LV.

MIND ! Sole, essential, uncreated Power,
That wast in the beginning, and shalt be
E'en at the end,—if I may dare explore
End or beginning in Eternity—
To Thee unblamed my homage would I pour,
In Whom all live and move and have their being ;
And I, all earthy as I be, would soar
Thro' gross and rare upborne upon thy wing,
And dive unfathom'd depths where pearls are glimmering :

LVI.

For nought that is is invious to Thee,
Of all material this wide world contains,
Or whelm'd beneath the depths of deepest sea,
Or stretch'd in space beyond the far'st domains
Of the universe, holding locality
In the brute void, alien to life and light :
In Thee it is : without Thee cannot be.
For if aught can lurk rebel to thy sight,
What is it ? where ? The name—the place restores thy
right.

LVII.

Great Spirit ! would we think to contemplate
Thy shadow—One ! Eternal ! Infinite !
Awhile we struggle venturous and elate,
Then fall back spent like raindrops as they smite
The huge colossus. As in scorn of fate,
We would renerve our energies, and heap
Thought upon thought to scale thy dizzy state.
Vain wish ! we strive in impotence ; and peep
Around, as who would find some vanish'd form of sleep :

LVIII.

Or, like a child whose eye hath cross'd the sun,
Stand blinded, doubting what before we saw.
In all—through all—all over, Thou'rt alone!
The main spring of creation; the main law
Of the created! By Thee knowing or known,
Active or passive, all thy presence wait!
Fain would I mark Thee by comparison—
But none is like Thee! Fain approximate—
But none is near Thee! None! The world's one Autocrat!

LIX.

And what is man to Thee? a tiny spark,
Shot from the furnace amidst myriads more!
Myriads of myriads! Some to smoulder dark,
Choked thro' long years for lack of quickening blore;
Some, chancing on meet fuel, quick to mark
Their place among their fellows, blazing forth
Incontinent; till spent with age or cark, [earth;
Death's mantle shrouds them from this wondering
To be admired no more in worlds of brighter birth.

LX.

So shines awhile amid the murk of night
The amorous glow-worm, vaunting Nature's boon
Among the insects ; till the dawn of light
Quenches her little pride, and tells too soon
This tale of truth—that she alone was bright,
Because her neighbour was more dull than she :
Read there, thou mighty man, nor boast thy might ;
Fair woman, read thy beauty's vanity :
Read, O Philosopher,—and be abased with me.

LXI.

Bards ! Statesmen ! Orators ! what are *ye* then ;
That ye would wear your haughty crests so high,
All grandly stiling down the paths of men ?
'Tis that the million walk so quietly,
That ye, of all the crowd, are heard and seen.
Ye shades of Pindar — Cæsar — Cicero,
And all most glorious who on earth have been,
O could ye once revisit us, and shew
The little worth above of what was fame below !

LXII.

But fame ! sweet fame ! Then must we taste it not ?
That honied draught, so sparkling to the eye,
So soft to th' palate ! but my soul is hot
Thirsting for fame ; and would be drunk—and die.
For is there aught beside, when fame is caught,
Worthy the chase ? My soul, it is not fame
Would slake thy yearning : fame may oft be bought
With counterfeit : itself unsound and lame,
May lure with harlot smile, and win thee to thy shame.

LXIII.

But be it fresh, and fair, and sound, and sweet ?—
Oh—lest thou drink too deep ! The sated fly
Licks the rich sirup from his dainty feet,
And preens his sugar'd wings ; in agony,
That for such feast, albeit a luscious treat,
He must forego the sunny sports of th' air ;
Degraded the low reptile brood to greet,
Who throng around his fellowship to share ;
Alas ! he quickly learns he has no fellow there.

LXIV.

Know, fame is but the colour of men's deeds,
And may belie them; as the slant rays shoot,
Marking choice flowers, or gilding worthless weeds :
'Tis like the bloom that paints autumnal fruit,
Bitterest perchance the brightest. But the seeds
Of Truth and Honour, planted in man's breast,
Still let him water them, tho' no eye heeds ;
Still let him watch while angry foes invest,
And rear a bower of peace wherein a god may rest.

LXV.

A god ! Is this a dream—a phantasy ?
Is aught of godhead in this thing of earth,
Puling for pity ; that 'twere charity
To quash at once the penalties of birth ?
The stroke were easy—Hold ! that unbraced thigh,
That thewless arm shall soon wax firm and straight ;
And it may be, a few short years sped by,
When thou art tottering on the brink of fate,
The thing thou pity'st now shall prop thy falling state.

LXVI.

Anon, his open eye—his covert ear
Shall scout for knowledge, amply foraging
O'er the wide fields of Science, far and near ;
And home each day to memory's garner bring
Their marshall'd spoils, which many a coming year
Reason may thrive upon ; and march her way, [pear
O'er smooth and rough, to where Heaven's gates ap-
Thro' the dim haze, with portcluse glimmering gray,
And on the lintel writ in light three letters—DAY.

LXVII.

The babe has drunk his early beverage,
And grabbles in the sun : his little fingers,
Itching for knowledge, clutch about t' assuage
Their longing. O'er each novel toy he lingers,
Eyes, feels, smells, tastes,—like monkey in his cage—
Then flings it straight away. But soon he learns,
As traveller on an unknown pilgrimage,
That others prize the things he fondly spurns ;
That fruits may still be sweet, tho' his false palate burns.

LXVIII.

What seems so worthless may be good in deed;
To know the good the deed must first be tried.
What boots the fleetness of a Tartar steed
To the poor craven who's afraid to ride?
What to the child of subtile parts is need,
Unless their use shall vindicate the boon?
Can others' ears his mother's accents read?
Can others syllable the clear-drawn tone?
And must his ears be dull, and mute his lips alone!

LXIX.

It is not so: with imitative sound
He proves his utterance, and lisps and bawls
Unseemly discord; then he stares around,
Suppliant of praise or pity: for the calls
Of first affection bid him early found
A temple for himself in other's breast,
Where he may shrine his thoughts on hallow'd ground;
Unscath'd of alien hate, or scoffing jest,
Or apathy,—the foe to all a child loves best.

LXX.

For lo ! an embryo that shall swell to love
Glanced with his milk, and settled in his breast :
As, gliding o'er the waste, the herald dove
Perch'd on the troubled arc, and token'd rest :
Rest ! it may be ; but in that love shall move
A host of passions with high elements rife ;
Which, gathering like the fitful clouds above,
May gently fertilize the vale of life,
Or rush impetuous down and sweep his days with strife.

LXXI.

This early sense—or it may be innate—
Of love, all burning to be loved agen,
Strives to deserve as it would gain that fate,
And spurs him on to excellence. And then
Comes young Ambition bids him emulate
The next above him—like an unbroke steed—
And stretch before his equals. Thus the gate,
That seem'd to bar him from fair Learning's meed,
He leaps it high o'er all, and dashes on with speed.

LXXII.

Alas! and why so breathless in his haste?
Is there nought other worthy of his care?
And what is Learning, when 'tis learnt at last?
Stand forth ye learned of the world that are;
Shew me your certainty of aught that's past:
How were the valleys made? the hills? and when?
The birds—the fishes in what mould were cast?
What present see ye more than other men?
Doth aught of future stand within your learned ken?

LXXIII.

Learning! Thee while a deity we hail—
Learning! what art thou?—but an interchange
Of poor opinion, fallible and frail!
The slave of passion—envy—pride—revenge!
Bigot in creed! fool-hacknied! thing of sale!
The foster-child of Opportunity!
Fresh at thy birth—soon wearisome and stale!
Despite of all thy votaries boast of thee,
Thou art, meseems, but part of this world's vanity.

LXXIV.

Still would I cling to thee, and fondly dream
Thou mayst be kin to Wisdom: but she dwells
With the rude boor; who tends his plodding team,
And in the bare sky reads a tale that tells
Of its Creator's glory! There a beam
Of His omnipotence is character'd;
Which to the learn'd perchance offence might seem,
No speech—no language—but a Voice is heard
Calling the day and night! and Wisdom owns the Word!

LXXV.

But I must rest: for I am sped to climb
A mountain-theme; and my heart faints e'en now.
It was a hardy thought, to bind in rhyme
This Protean myst'ry, 'gainst which others go
Arm'd with free words of every age and clime.
But I will rest me: and I well can spare
A few loose moments in the flush of time:
For 'twas but yesterday, that I did fare
Myself a puling thing, and babbled to the air.

LXXVI.

My Father ! who didst watch my early day,
My first instructor, latest—dearest friend !
Thou, who in love didst chide my froward way,
And mark my childish follies but to mend ;
All lonely tending, lest thy lambs should stray,
The summer of thy life ! if e'er it be
Thine eye shall fall on this sententious lay
Of one, who oft hath prattled on thy knee,
Thou wilt not know thy son : but he'll remember thee.

END OF BOOK I.

ELEUSINIA;
OR,
THE SOUL'S PROGRESS.

BOOK II.

YOUTH.

* * nunc et campus et alea
Mollesque sub noctem susurri. HOR.

ARGUMENT.

1. Address to the Poets. The epic and tragic Poets of Greece—Virgil—Sappho—Lucretius—Dante. vi. Shakespeare and Milton. ix. Byron. xii. Second stage of life—Youth, and Liberty. The free pursuits and fresh feelings of Youth. xv. Early recollections. xx. Youthful appetites. Military fame—Field-sports. xxi. Philosophical view of these. xxvi. Description of various sports. Shooting—Hunting—Fishing. xxxi. Transitoriness of youthful enjoyment. xxxiv. Horse-racing. xxxvi. Reflections. xxxvii. Gaming. xxxix. Archery. xl. Social pleasures of Youth. xli. Man's fallen condition and duty of expiation: the gaiety of Youth notwithstanding. xliv. Change of taste. Contemplative humour. xlvi. The Lover. xlix. His soliloquy. lix. His complaint. lx. Reflections on love. lxii. Mutual love. lxv. Marriage. lxvi. Concubinage. lxvii. Jealousy. lxviii. Chastity. lxxi. Pure nature of love. lxxii. Speculations on its endurance after the body's dissolution.



ELEUSINIA.

BOOK II.

YOUTH.

I.

BARDS of the Earth! whose names are glittering,
Like meteors o'er the whelming deep of Time;
Where Ye have sung, may I aspire to sing?
Or hope to consecrate my graceless rhyme?
For I am but a lowly nameless thing;
Unborn of wealth, unlapp'd in luxury,
Unmark'd along the full world wandering!
A worm impatient of obscurity,
And crawling into light—just to be crush'd, and die!

II.

But like as one, whose mis-adventurous tread
Hath plunged him in the waters, groans to hear
The hoarse death-boding tide and thrusts his head
All gasping for the air, thus in my ear
The heavy buzz of bus'ness sinks like lead
To smother my light heart! What wonder then,—
But for the mill wherein I grind my bread—
That I should curse the dusty haunts of men,
And pant to breathe apart by forest, lake, or glen?

III.

Where I might converse with some mighty Shade;
Old Homer, and his thousand satellites:
Or that grave buskin'd choir of Greece, which made
The wrangling nations brawl for Virtue's rights:
It were more fitting in some sylvan glade
To watch the kids that frisk thro' Maro's page,
Or breathe soft love-notes with the Lesbian maid:
Or deep-embower'd in noiseless foliage,
Trace Nature's labyrinths, with Rome's muse-philtred
Sage:

IV.

The Sage who warr'd with Pain and Fear and Hell,
Turn'd thoughts to words, and dress'd the graceless
Of the rude elements, with magic skill ; [forms
And, like a sorcerer, would still the storms
That vex man's bosom and pervert his will.
Now fades the daylight, and each browner pine
Tells that the Sun hath stoop'd behind his hill :
Welcome, thou dark and woe-drunk Florentine !
Come with thy bowl of tears, and let me mix with thine :

V.

And I will sup my fill of shadowy thought,
And bend me o'er thy chalice, till my soul
Reels with the fummy potion ; then, o'erfraught
With gloomy phantasy, I seem to stroll
Along thy visionary world, distraught
With uncouth monsters and heart-grindings shrieks—
The wailings of the damn'd. Sure thou hast taught
A curious truth—How most unearthly freaks
Of fancy hallow'd come, if but a Poet speaks !

VI.

Or hail, ye minions of the dainty Nine!
Thou—swan of Avon, who thine untaught will
Didst wreak on prudish Learning ; and thou—fine
And hood-slipt falcon, towering Heavenward still,
For Earth's base spirit was no kin to thine !
Oh ye shall mock Oblivion's lubber power,
Live through all time, and on men's hearts inline—
The deathless fancies of your passing hour ;
Sprinkling their flaggy thought with renovating shower.

VII.

Rare swan of Avon ! Mark him—sedge-hid now
Brushing for food, but ever to the air
Rearing his snaky neck, as if to shew
It is no vulgar duck that grubbles there :
Now like some river-god secure and slow
Floating in pride ; or with the lighter brood
Darting aloof and sporting to and fro.
Magic of words to stir each sluggish mood !
Writ not with ink, 'tis said, but with his own heart's
blood.

VIII.

The other was of sterner temperament :
But in his unfledged boyhood did he couch
With the soft Muse ; whom nor mature intent,
Nor bitter zeal, nor wrath could disavouch :
But teeming Fancy watch'd to find a vent,
And burst upon the thankless age, distraught
With heavenly mists and worldly merriment.

O Poesy sublimed with holy thought !

O Wisdom doubly sweet when classic Milton taught !

IX.

Who's he would teach us in this latter year ?—
From an old wither'd stock there sprang a scion,
Who, spurn'd of men, wiped off a gathering tear ;
Then in his fury ramp'd like a young lion,
When lust or hunger or the hunter's spear
Do goad him into madness. Rushing forth
He doff'd his tinsel for a pilgrim's gear :
Still his clear spirit mark'd his noble birth,
And spired into the air and blazed o'er the wide earth.

X.

But ah ! he sunk—he sunk to blaze no more !
No more to tinge the sky with brighter blue !
They brought his ashes to his native shore :
His dust is gather'd where his young heart grew ;
Where first his eager fancy learn'd to soar ;
Hard by the vast and venerable pile,
Where kindred souls (if such be) still adore :
And many a traveller holds his steed awhile,
To view the dome whose strength is pillar'd in each aisle.

XI.

Hard by that dome his bones are mouldering.
But, Britain ! in thine antique sepulchre,
Where pious Memory shrines herself, to bring
Back to our thoughts such deeds as noblest were
What tablet tells that Harold once did sing ?
Shame on the bigot dotards ! would they bind
With leaden chain Fame's air-compacted wing ?
'Tis our's, the glory that is there enshrined :
Oh—lest our sons should blush for Sires so meanly
blind !—

XII.

The child has wander'd from his mother's side,
To walk alone the novel path of joy :
There let him freak his fancy, unespied,
And snatch the shortlived glories of a boy ;
There let him play, and feed his early pride
In native energy to pass his peers :
Soon circumstance may force his bent aside,
And some ungenial task of riper years
May choke his barren heart and glaze his eye with tears.

XIII.

How sweet is liberty ! Tho' we may drink
Till our hearts sicken ; and we pant to find
Some master-spirit, whereunto to link
Our erring will, and with obedience blind
To minister for love. Still may we think,
How sweet is liberty, if only this
We can recall—when first life's slippery brink
Our free feet totter'd as they learn'd to press,
The forms we pictured then of this world's happiness !

XIV.

The reins of pupillage are slacked at last :
Hail, virgin pleasure ! hail, delicious life !
If aught there seem'd of bitterness—'tis past :
Earth is a Paradise with sweet fruits rife.
Thro' his young veins the warm drops chasing fast
Water his heart to flower with ecstasies.
Not yet satiety has hack'd his taste :
Heaven still is fair, and sweet the sun's warm kiss,
Friendship as yet is true, and love to him is bliss.

XV.

Is there, whose mind, reflective o'er the past,
Beams not with many a radiant scene of Youth;
When company was knit by mutual taste,
And trust was sure—the generous child of Truth ?
For me full oft a happy lot was cast,
But of all throws my memory clings to one—
The friend to whom my youth was bound most fast :
It might be that he was my father's son ;
Yet of my father's sons like him I clave to none.

XVI.

It might be that he was the first I knew ;
Yet verily I loved him to the last :
For never did I find a heart more true,
A softer temper, or a faith more fast.
In the same nursing-plot our boyhood grew,
Though his was harden'd by three winters more ;
And oft round me a sheltering arm he threw,
When first I left my tender parent's door,
And flinch'd beneath the rod that urchin tyrants bore.

XVII.

And as in stature he was still ahead,
So still in learning's path he held before ;
How easily I follow'd while he led,
Till I had topp'd the height of boyish lore.
Then on a steeper hill I mark'd him sped,
So far above, I trembled every nerve :
But still he beckon'd, and my steps aled,
O'er plain and solid mass, by right and curve,
That, tho' perchance I would, methinks I could not
swerve.

XVIII.

Oft when I felt, or feign'd, my strength o'ertask'd,
His hand upheld me thro' the sultry noon ;
Or side by side upon the heath we bask'd,
And gave to idleness a sunny boon.
Then careless prattle all our hearts unmask'd,
And our affections freshen'd, like the showers
Which fall upon the springing year unask'd,
That goodly fruits, and many-colour'd flowers,
May paint the summer scene, and cheer th' autumnal
hours.

XIX.

Together thus we kept our pleasant road,
Till he was call'd to tend a distant flock :
Such task was deem'd to suit his gentle mood ;
Tho', well I know, against the roughest shock
His quiet courage had undaunted stood.
Reft of my friend—my guide, I then did fare
In crowds alone, as wandering in a wood ;
And for long time my solitary care
Noted the ways of men, wherein it would not share.

XX.

How Glory dazzles in youth's early day ;
Smiling like sunshine on a mountain-top,
While wildering vapours skirt the middle way !
Hark to the swelling drum, the fife's shrill stop !
Now the soft stream of music steals its way,
Now bursts, to bear our sickly yearnings down,
And rouse the demon spirit of the fray !
Or rustic Nature lures us from the town,
To while our happy hours with pastimes all her own.

XXI.

There is a rapture in the deed of sport
I fain would contemplate. It is not mirth,
Where all is earnest as th' embattled fort
Waiting fierce onslaught or more deadly dearth.
'Tis not the spur of hunger, or hard sort :
Nor e'en, methinks, inborn ferocity ;
For at the music of the jolly mort,
Who, that e'er saw the quarry's woe-fraught eye,
Hath stood all joyous by, nor shared his agony ?

XXII.

To yearn ; and covet what we ne'er may taste ;
To struggle but to sink in impotence ;
To chase a phantom o'er a weary waste,
And still pursuing end where we commence ;
Such is the curse of man : the which to cast
Behind us, and create a mimic life,
Where something palpable is reach'd at last—
This whets to cruelty the sportsman's knife :
But whence the soldier's joy of unavailing strife ?

XXIII.

Poor tool of tyranny ! which bids him rise
And hurry forth to slaughter—or be slain,
Deck'd, like a victim for the sacrifice,
In tinsel vesture and tiara vain—
Traps for weak maids, whose favour swells the price
Of what weak men call glory ! Soldier ! pause—
Ponder the ends of warfare, and be wise.
It may be hallow'd by a righteous cause :
But let not man, brief man, repeal th' Eternal's laws !

XXIV.

A shame on glory, if it must be won
From the ript carcasses of fellow men !
But if the foreigner should buckle on
His greedy sword—as prowling from his den
A wanton tiger—or, as hath been done,
If e'en your countryman should vaunt his might
Above the laws—then, Britons ! rise as one ;
But call it not for glory, but for right :
So may ye come unscath'd and honour'd from the fight.

XXV.

But be not lured for pastime, or for pay,
To rend the bowels of your brother man :
What—be it lawful ? There shall come a day,
When murtherers for hire must meet their ban :
That ban the law which hired them shall not stay ;
Law then no longer ! for with them shall stand
The very lawgivers who bade them slay ;
The hirer with the hired ! But would thy hand
Its manly cunning prove, and wield a guiltless brand ?

XXVI.

There is a rapture, on the heathy moor,
O'er grassy glen, and mountain jagg'd with rock,
To mark the nimble dogs each brake explore.
There is a rapture, when the towering cock
Comes toppling from his glory, doom'd no more
To crow defiance from his distant hill
To mock thy weariness! or would'st thou scour
The corn-stript plain? the covey, crouching still,
Like an explosion springs, and makes thy young blood
thrill!

XXVII.

There is a rapture, at the dewy morn
To track the fish-fed tyrant from his bed,
Monster of earth and water, mongrel-born,
And wreak hard vengeance on his felon head.
But oh! to mount thee at the winding horn—
Thy steed all trembling as thyself, when first—
A challenge! hark!—The scoundrel, cross'd and lorn,
Sneaks from the covert, like a thing accurst!
Hold! Hold! And then—oh! then the glorious gallant
burst!

XXVIII.

Thy horse! he caught the note which promised chase,
Prick'd his keen ear and mettled for the start.
Now feel his vigour mantling to the race!
Now play thee to his muscles! how thy heart
Beats to his heart, and burns for foremost place!
Thy frenzy deems him all a part of thee,
And maddens in the fury of his pace!
O ye who fare content afoot to be,
How little do ye know a hunter's ecstasy!

XXIX.

Or does a gentler pastime please thee more?
There is a rapture, by the rippling brook,
Or where the yesty waters chafe and roar
At some rock's base, to mask the treach'rous hook
With hues that seem of nature; or to pore
In expectation of a cloud or breeze:
Then, hast thou mark'd the trout to leap before?
Him may'st thou lure thy mimic fly to seize:
Hold him—nor rail at life, while life hath sports like
these.

XXX.

This is a pastime, Nature's favourite,
Sacred to contemplation. Earth's soft hues,
The music of the waters, and the light—
The cloud-attemper'd light, bring down the Muse
Into our hearts. Perchance the scene is dight
With the dear memory of our early days?
How sweet to linger till the gray twilight,
And watch upon the bank for elves and fays!
But ah! since we were young the world hath changed
its ways!

XXXI.

And I—how changed, since heedless erst of fame
I chased the may-fly fluttering from my reach!
But still enough for me remains the same;
The weedy water, and the shelving beach,
And winding channel—these can fan a flame
To kindle bright remembrance of past joy.
And then this little tenant of the stream;
In self-same trim, and still as brisk and coy,
—To shame our modish world—as when I was a boy!

XXXII.

Oh that I now could call me back those hours,
Those dewy hours I laugh'd and play'd away
In this fair garden, gathering fruits and flowers
In their first bloom, before the scorching day
Had spoil'd their freshness : then the soul's young
Draw rapture from the very light of life ; [powers
Nor know 'tis rapture ; till too soon there lowers
A bellying cloud, with thousand big drops rife,
To break the flowers of peace, and damp the seeds of
strife !

XXXIII.

And then 'tis all a waste—a wilderness !
Where as we wander, if without a foe
To curse us, yet with scarce a friend to bless,
This our chief consolation as we go—
To feed our soul with bygone happiness,
And dream that such it chance may taste again.
Alas, sad solace ! in the heart's distress,
Who dreams of joy must wake to tenfold pain !
But be whatever is, for Heaven doth all ordain.

XXXIV.

Lo ! on some ocean-plain of turf a crowd
Huddles—a motley crowd, like swarming bees,
Lord, squire and peasant, rich, poor, lowly, proud,
And silk-bedizen'd dames of all degrees,
Old, young, maid, matron, wife, and harlot; stow'd
In strange affinity ! And all is still :
Save when from some deep bosom burst aloud
The agonies of hope or fear, and fill
The fluttering hearts around with its unholy thrill.

XXXV.

They come ! they come ! The pressing thousands rise
In tiptoe expectation. Like a troop
Of journeying fowls that stretch adown the skies,
Moves o'er the distant heath a mantling group ;
Seen but as rolling balls to novice eyes.
They come ! they come ! a moment scarce is flown—
A cry of doubt—fear—anguish—joy—surprise !
Hark to the rattling hoofs ! they pass ! they're gone !
All hail the glorious race ! the gallant steed that won !

XXXVI.

We pant for ecstasy—a freshening shower
Wherein to bathe our spirits, and to wash
Our bosoms of ourselves for one brief hour.
Is this a dull disease which we would lash
Into activity and health and power?
Or but the wholesome nature of man's heart,
To yearn for glowing passion; which may store
His soul with admiration, and impart
Fine sense of th' beautiful, in science and in art?

XXXVII.

It were a lesson worthy man to read,
As splendid is the sight, surpass'd of none,
This emulation of the generous steed,
The noblest of Earth's creatures,—all save one :
But that a fiend of Hell pollutes the deed,
Cloaking his filthiness in this fair vest,
While o'er men's hearts he scatters golden seed,
Which shoots into a rank and selfish zest,
Taints the clean air of faith, and poisons wholesome rest.

XXXVIII.

Barbarian still ! they urge the senseless dice,
Ravening for luck, and stake at odd or even
Their fame and fortune ; proffering in a trice
Their very birth-right to the light of Heaven,
If Chance command—that tyrant-sire of lies,
Whose fealty they call *honour* !—But fresh Youth
May tempt its cravings with uncostly prize,
And feast on guiltless victory : In sooth,
The simplest sports befit the gentle soul of Truth.

XXXIX.

All girt like Dian's handmaids, and as chaste,
In some still vale the quiver'd fair are met.
The targets fix'd, the distance featly paced,
Their bows all strung, and arrows truly set,
In every countenance bright hope infaced,
They scan the difficult speck, and pant for fear.
Then, with an air that Cynthia's self had graced
Drawn as in parting just to kiss the ear,
Forth leap th' unvenom'd darts, to spill nor blood nor tear.

XL.

Then is there music, rout, and ball, and play;
All have their pleasures, ere th' unsocial heart
Beats but for one—that one perchance away:
How quick the wit, the jeer, the free laugh start
Fresh into life, like insects of a day!
How easily the light-limb'd dancers move!
Th' untutor'd mirth! the humour pure and gay!
The warm-lipp'd whisper redolent of love!
These are the witnesses that healthy bosoms prove.—

XLI.

There is a scripture hard and mystical,
More mystified by controverting men:
That we lie whelm'd, by one primeval fall,
In the black whirling gulf of mortal sin:
Whence a strong arm is stretch'd to rescue all;
But few can reach it, and few will that may.
Meanwhile, with tricks and sports fantastical,
The truant spirits wanton in the spray;
Till down they're suck'd at last from the fair face of day.

XLII.

Enough that it is writ : we must atone
For foregone follies done in other days :
Be they our one first parent's, or our own.
I would not question Heaven's transcendent ways ;
Still as I search and meditate alone,
Methinks in Adam's fall I read a story
Of our own sinfulness in ages gone :
Partly that much is writ in allegory ;
And part to vindicate our just Creator's glory.

XLIII.

So as we would atone we must amend,
And work our expiation : lest we sink
Deeper and deeper still, and find no end
Of desolation. Still upon the brink
Of this sad gulf, the gay and thoughtless wend
Their pleasant way : fond youths and laughing fair
Pass and repass, and meet again to spend
Their hours in wantonness, and wreath their hair
With coronals of flowers, and joy is all their care.

XLIV.

Joy be their lot—nor thought of others' fate,
Till they shall feel the burthen of their own :
For lo ! the pastimes which they loved so late—
Pleasures no more—are soon all tedious grown ;
Stale as a calendar of bygone date ;
Void as a phantom in the darken'd air,
Which at day's inroad dies ! But new-create
Fresh forms arise, as palpable and fair :
O could I write them real ! But such I must not dare.

XLV.

There is a stillness in the noonday scene
That nurses contemplation. In the trees
The ruffled birds amid their native green
Await the whisper'd promise of a breeze.
All humbly to the sun's meridian sheen
The flowers bow down their heads in modesty :
Man, ever doom'd to toil, e'en man is seen
To wipe his sweaty brow, and homeward hie,
Or slumber in the shade, despite of penury.

XLVI.

All, all is still. Against a beech hard by
There leans a man, like one of purpose foil'd :
He droops his head, but not for modesty :
Nor more in slumber, for he has not toil'd.
Fix'd on the ground he holds his haggard eye,
Which seems to stop not there, but penetrate
Earth's inaccessible caverns, and descry
Visions of story past and future fate ;
And read strange tales, that wring his soul to contemplate.

XLVII.

Was it not he, who laugh'd the morn away
As if his dewy heart would never flag
To th' tyrant sun ? who at the dawn of day
Bounded from sober thought, like a young stag
That snuffs the chase, list'ning the bugles play
Along his glen, where nought he wont to hear
Save some wild bird, or the fresh-tumbling spray ?
Or rude Mishap hath tript his light career ;
Or curst in guilt, like Cain, he stands aghast for fear !

XLVIII.

O say not guilt : he had a gentle mind
That oft hath sicken'd at another's woe :
It cannot be, that one so soft and kind
Should harden to become his fellow's foe.
See there ! his pencil marks the silver rind :
Some name perchance his wary lips refuse
To syllable, for dread his ears should wind
Like venom to his heart the thrilling news.
But hark ! his voice comes hoarse, as 'twere by long
disuse :—

XLIX.

In a fair city of the sunny south
All things went merrily : the ball, the masque,
And rout, and serenade for silly youth ;
Till revelry became almost a task !
Love in all eyes, and sighs in every mouth !
But two were there who seem'd to stem the tide
That bore all onward—weeds of stronger growth ;
Who scoff'd at love, and laugh'd while others sigh'd,
And oft with quips and jeers their hearts to proof defied.

I..

And they were not uncomely ; albeit he
Summers thrice ten, nor fewer she, had seen.
Monimio he— she nameless still shall be.
He of grave modesty and manly mien :
Yet in his eye there slumber'd waggish glee,
Which held the crowd aloof ; as what would say—
The bull hath horns, all gentle tho' he be.
His solitary hours he whiled away
O'er books of truth divine, or tales of other day.

LI.

Nor was he rebel to the gentler sway
Of soft seductive poesy ; and e'en
Would weep in secret o'er the tender lay :
How had he blush'd to think his tears were seen !
Yet sterner hearts than his might melt away,
With others' woe decoying forth their own :
There's many a frailty 'scapes the light of day.
'Twas said, at times when Fortune seem'd to frown,
Himself a pen would snatch, and mark his musings down.

LII.

She was of sprightlier mood, yet more severe :
Too cold and pensive for the summer swarm
That hum and flutter round fair woman's ear :
Their insect blood quick curdles with alarm,
Sweet be the fruit, if bitter lurketh there.
Yet was she lightsome as the merry May,
When flies of worthier order hover'd near ;
Then beam'd her face with reason's brightest ray,
No wit more keen than her's, no heart than her's more gay.

LIII.

Well was she skill'd in parley ; and her tongue
Could barter foreign words with native grace ;
Nor yet betray its breeding to the throng
By lisping utterance or uncouth phrase :
Then had she learn'd to pour her soul in song,
And run her cunning fingers o'er the lyre :
May such soft lesson to soft dames belong !
Yet she was not all soft : but could inspire
As well the lofty thought, as elegant desire.

LIV.

And she loved manlier pastimes, and could rein
The prancing steed, and cheer the generous hound :
The hound, sagacious of her kindred vein,
Would bay in full-mouth'd gratitude, or bound
To challenge her caresses, and would fain
Have lick'd the well-known accents from her lips.
And when she sail'd on the cloud-curtain'd main,
Her genial spirit swell'd 'mid giant ships,
And waves, that seem more huge while the young sea-
bird dips.

LV.

But deem her not ungentle, more for that :
Oh had ye seen her from his mother's arm
Catch the brave laughing boy ! and when the brat
Had cried in pettish anger or alarm,
She kiss'd him back to laughter and young chat.
Embolden'd, he would climb her breast to gain ;
And there, with tiny-finger'd pinch or pat,
Provoke her sweet rebuke ; then slyly feign
To wipe his little eye, to be caress'd again.

LVI.

But when she mingled in the glittering throng,
'Twas more for scorn than sympathy : and oft
Monimio cross'd her as she pass'd along.
And her eyes wander'd not in glances soft,
Those secret messengers, that move among
The warm gazell-eyed daughters of the south
To herald thought of love, than words more strong :
But in her eye sat Raillery ; and her mouth
Seem'd as it long'd to laugh, howe'er to smile was loth.

LVII.

And oft his eye met her's, and seem'd to catch
Its colour by the meeting, and to burn
With fresh-lit pleasantry : and they would watch
To change a passing word at every turn,
The young conceit each brain was wont to hatch,
In sentence half-express'd, full-understood ;
Few words suffice when Humour meets his match.
And thus they lived and laugh'd in merry mood ;
But never mentioned Love, or mock'd the silly god.

LVIII.

But men are men, and maids are maids, I trow ;
And love they must despite of merriment.
So it fell out. But it were long to shew
The path of their affection : how it went
From gay to grave, by sinuous steps and slow,
From grave to graver, onward ; till at last
It wore the semblance of severest woe ;
And sought in solitude to weep and fast ;
Like some soft exile plant from its fair climate cast.—

LIX.

—And then he sigh'd, as he were choked with pain ;
And mutter'd half unheard :—A curse on pride,
That poisons woman's tongue with false disdain,
While healthy nature cries her heart belied !
And what, tho' friendship she vouchsafe to feign ;
He, whone'er felt, ne'er knew, how hard the exchange
To barter love for friendship ! Deadly gain—
That common smile, denied to none who range
Wide earth ! For grave offence 'twere too severe re-
venge !—

LX.

O Love ! thou art indeed a mystery ;
Of our ethereal part an attribute,
For low mortality too fine and high !
Flesh clogs thy delicate springs with its own brute
Impediment, and turns thy harmony
To jarring discord. Little art thou known
To such as never proved thy potency :
The cold maid's scorn ! The jest of pamper'd drone,
Who dreads by sharing joy to minish aught his own !

LXI.

And yet how few the uninitiate !
Tho' some but loiter in the outer court :
Some press with high devotion on, and wait
Within thy sanctuary ; in such sad sort,
With sunken eye and melancholy gait
And pallid cheek and signs of secret pain,
They seem as stricken by the hand of Fate.
Yet thou art kind, and rarely dost ordain
That who devoutly wait shall wait for aye in vain.

LXII.

O ye that love and are beloved again
In unity of passion, ye have found
The goodliest flower that glows on life's cold plain.
Oh haste ye, from the rude world fence it round ;
And nurse its growth, and watch with jealous pain,
And consecrate the spot all solemnly.
So shall no speck its snowy petals stain :
Its snowy petals opening to the sky
Shall teach your grateful hearts their Maker glorify.

LXIII.

Snatch there a sweet foretaste of Paradise ;
While, all oblivious of your carnal load,
Ye mingle your light souls in ecstasies,
Couching on beds of peace by plenty strow'd.
Still own your feebleness, if ye be wise :
Whilst ye would blend, like water-drops, and flow
Together to eternity, the ties
That seem all adamant, even now
Full in their vigour's prime, grow strain'd and weak
and low ;

LXIV.

—And burst, it may be, with unnatural jar !
But cruise we not for folly : our's the task
To explore the deep, Nature our polar star.
From Guilt's foul face let others pluck the mask ;
Ours to descry new peaks and hills afar,
By foot of man untrack'd, untenanted
Save by the light of Heaven, which mantles there
O'er native glen, lake, river, fountain-head,
As fresh and fair as aught that man e'er habited.

LXV.

Thrice blest condition—for accordant twain
To love and cherish till by death they're riven !
It is a golden link in that one chain
Which leads from heaven to earth, from earth to
All offset spirit binding with the Main [heaven,
And with itself, in kind communion.
So may we never pour our love in vain,
Like Danaus' fabled daughters, while anon
It runs to water thorns, still pouring reckless on !

LXVI.

It is a grievous sight, full often seen—
Our young seed cast upon the barren strand !
Our goodliest branches, unmatured and green,
All gnarl'd and canker'd by Decay's foul hand !
I loathe to think—that youth of gentle mien
Should spurn the silken sway of virtuous dame,
To hug the trammels of some lewd-eyed quean !
To swelter there in lechery's smirching flame,
Heedless of health and wealth, of country, friends, and
fame !

LXVII.

Say, does he love ? His blood-run*livid eye
Tells nought of love, that peaceful joy of Heaven.
Oh, hell of hells—heart-blighting jealousy !
To sue for faith where faith can ne'er be given ?
To kiss from wanton lips the ready lie,
And envy dulness to believe withal !
Poor fool ! pine on in thy simplicity :
As urchin, who in sport hath aim'd his ball, [fall.
Cries that the pure bright drops from the chink'd goblet

LXVIII.

But, Chastity ! How shall I speak of thee ?
Or as free habitant of this gross earth ?
Or as some spirit of Heaven that would be free,
And 'scape to the bright country of its birth ?
For thou dost vaunt thee in thy misery ;
Like captive bird which sings so sweet and gay,
Watching the wink of Opportunity :
While stern-faced Precept, that would bid thee stay,
Leers with his other eye, and scares thee more away !

LXIX.

Oh Chastity ! it is not in the breath
Of men's opinions thou should'st plume thyself :
For men's opinions are as foul as death ;
And false as foul, veering for freak or pelf.
So, whilst secure the fair breeze fashioneth
Thy glossy feathers, comes a thwarting blast
And ruffles thy smooth fame. But thou may'st wreathe
Of those fresh flowers, which Nature's hand hath cast
In th' bosom of the young, the beautiful, the chaste,

LXX.

A chaplet worthy to be worn of thee !
Then walk alone above the world's controul ;
And deck thyself in pride of purity,
Glass'd at the mirror of a spotless soul :
Reflected there thy heavenly features see :
As when the first white beam of dawning day
With its own image fills the dew-sprent tree :
The dew-sprent tree pours back the virgin ray,
And peopled o'er with pearls dim twilight smiles away.

LXXI.

It is not lust, nor aught akin to lust,
That Love can thrive upon ; like some rank weed
By the way-side, which roots in the vile dust.
Love is a plant that grows of goodly seed,
Water'd by Purity, and warm'd by Trust :
On holy ground where no lewd eye may come,
Where no rude hand unhallow'd grasp may thrust,
No stranger foot unbidden dare to roam,
There Love vouchsafes awhile to make on earth his home.

LXXII.

Awhile!—And must I die, and love no more?
And must my soul be sever'd from that other
With which it twines itself each day—each hour?
Must I forget a sister—father—brother?
Full well I know the clouds of death shall lower,
And shroud me from this visible earth and air:
Then in the grave my nerveless limbs shall cower,
And this warm heart the cold-lipp'd worms shall tear,
Till men may ask my place—but none will answer where.

LXXIII.

I know that I shall perish :—Yet not I,
But this frail tenement in which I dwell.
Be it—my flesh all discompactly
Hath crumbled into atoms : I feel well
There is a *something* of me shall not die :
Something each mother's son hath thought upon,
From the low cot to lofty canopy :
All, all have thought on it. And what is known
Of this thought-hacknied thing at last?—A name alone!

LXXIV.

A name—without an object ! Say, ye wise,
Say, O Philosophers, what can ye more ?
Still, in the rupture of our earthly ties,
If there be hope to save the honied store
Of love, that hived within our bosoms lies ;
Oh ! let my spirit sip that opiate,
And glory in the rising fantasies.
If such be writ not in the book of Fate,
The present hope is sweet—the bitter truth comes late.

LXXV.

My Sister ! did I name thee in my fear ;
And doubt to love thee when this flesh is past ?
Then is it flesh—the tie that binds us here ?
True—in the self-same mould our limbs were cast ;
Our features stamp'd with the same character :
And we were nurtured at the self-same rill :
O might we rest together on one bier,
As we together climb this weary hill !
But what of flesh for this the love that binds us still ?

LXXVI.

Oh no ! Such love is not of earthy breed ;
But planted in the genial soil of Heaven,
Where no flesh is to taint the healthy seed
With the rank ferment of terrestrial leaven.
Such still must live ; for in it I can read
Perennial quality, that can not die.
If what is purest here shall find its meed,
And still be pure in immortality,
It is a brother's love, a sister's sympathy.

END OF BOOK II.

ELEUSINIA ;

OR,

THE SOUL'S PROGRESS.

BOOK III.

MANHOOD.

Man that is born of woman is of few days and full of
trouble.

JOB.

A R G U M E N T.

- i. The clearer prospects of Manhood. ii. The blessings of an even temperament, and pains of sensibility. v. Pity. vi. The Poet's scheme of this Book—his feelings which prompt it. ix. Man's coveting of wealth, as the means of happiness. x. Difficulty of attaining happiness on Earth. It is not compatible with apathy—its degree depends on the soul's capability. xiv. The contemplation of human misery useful to all, but chiefly to the luxurious and thoughtless. xvi. Prosperity contrasted with affliction—The proud minions of the world with the outcast occupants of a madhouse. xxiv. Wretched fantasies of its inmates. xxv. Imagination—danger in its incontinent indulgence. xxvii. Different kinds of insanity. xxix. Humiliation at the spectacle—psychological inferences. xxxiv. By constant intercourse with human woes we learn to expect and exaggerate them—The sufficiency of what really exist. xxxv. Poverty—disease and pestilence. xxxix. Description of the Plague. xli. Moral effects related by Thucydides. xlix. The Cholera. li. Universal dread of Death. Reasons and Reflections. liv. The greatest human calamities are inflicted by Man himself. lv. His fury passions. lvi. His cruel inventions, and hellish propensities. Tyranny. lviii. Poland. Her patriotism—oppression—depopulation. lxiii. A victor's policy. Machiavelli. lxv. The expatriation and anguish of the Poles—their prospects of vengeance. lxvii. War—by whose device and for whose pleasure. Its object, peace, never fully accomplished. lxx. The amelioration of mankind prevented by discord. lxxii. The uses of adversity.



ELEUSINIA.

BOOK III.

MANHOOD.

I.

THE child--boy--youth, life's dreamy twilight o'er,
Wakes into manhood. Straight an opening ray
Of thought, of feeling tells another hour,
Such as would seem to mark the middle day.
The dank fog creeps along the vales no more :
No more upon the hills a fitful blaze
Gleaming against the darkness, as before,
In dazzling dim encounter spreads amaze ;
But o'er the still clear scene he may serenely gaze.

II.

Happy, who never felt the tide of thought
That ebbs and flows within a poet's brain ;
Now sunk in feebleness—now swoln, and fraught
With slipp'ry monsters ; whose quaint hues distain
The glass of reason, crusting viewless nought
With shadowy existence : till the soul,
Teeming with crude conception, all untaught
Bursts into poesy ; as fresh tears roll
To ease the labouring heart, impatient of controul.

III.

How smooth the current of his years flows on !
His days of business, his nights of sleep !
He views, if aught within his ken may run,
Nor cares beyond that little ken to peep.
What is this earth to him ? those stars ? that sun ?
The stars are beautiful, the sun is bright,
The earth is fertile—all for him alone !
He walks the inheritor of day and night,
The monarch of the soil, where all seems his by right !

IV.

And what to him, if others want and grieve ?
He pities,—but his pity is not pain :
And if kind chance should grant him to relieve,
Then is their grief his joy, their want his gain.
Thrice blest ! who ne'er doth alien cypress weave
With his own myrtle, curst in sympathy ;
Whose heart doth not, chameleón-like, conceive
Strange shades of sorrow, nor his jaundiced eye
See foul discolourment in the fair earth and sky !

V.

Pity ! thou envier of the young and gay,
Why wilt thou mar their meed of innocence ?
A vapoury phantom of our early day
Affrighting maiden Inexperience !
A false-reflected image, seen by ray
Of meteor Fancy in Fear's quivering tide !
As when disporting on a holiday
Some damsel leaning o'er the vessel's side
Views her sweet features there misshapen, magnified.

VI.

Yet must I count the catalogue of woe
That waits humanity ! I will essay
The shadow of some passing thoughts to shew,
That broke the sunshine of my youthful day.
What chill'd me then would little cool me now !
'Twere like a vernal shower at Christmas-tide,
When the bleak hills are mantled o'er with snow :
Now might I laugh, perchance, where then I cried ;
But Youth's light laugh is lost, when Youth's fresh tears
are dried.

VII.

For I have sail'd upon the world's rough sea,
And gazed upon the tempest at its height ;
Have toil'd by day with the ship's company,
And rock'd me to the billowy surge at night.
To strive with wind and wave unceasingly—
To tow the shameless log—to tack—to steer—
To struggle windward, but still drop to lee—
Hardens the hands and makes the young heart sere :
For Passion's scorpion sting bears its own death-wound
near.

VIII.

Now sun-embrown'd, and toughen'd by the blast,
I little list to tend the fickle sky.
The clouds may roll their monster mountains past ;
Or float amid the blue all summerly,
Like cygnet-down on the lake's bosom cast :
Alike to me they bring nor hope nor fear.
Yet oh ! how sweet, the voyage of peril past,
To count the woes of many a by-gone year ;
To tell how many a mate was laid in wat'ry bier !—

IX.

The flash of novelty is spent : again
Nor sport nor love shall manhood's passion move.
Chill'd is the glow that fired his soul amain.
Sport is a foolery : and what is love ?
A shortlived rapture, or a lingering pain.
Joyless alike as profitless they seem.
Now the clear path of happiness is plain :
He pants for riches—wealth is all his scheme.
Oh ! that what seems so real should prove so soon a
dream !

X.

Mark the proud sons of wealth : how many there,
Of such as boldly think and freely tell,
Find ye, who have not wearied in despair
Searching on earth where happiness may dwell ?
True, many preach of it, and point us where :
All are physicians for their neighbours' ills :
But can they medicate the rankling care
Of their own bosoms ? 'Tho' oblivion stills,
'Tis but our sense awhile, not the disease, it kills.

XI.

Then we should nurse oblivion, and steep
Our hearts in apathy, and feed on good
As there were nought of ill ? or haply reap
From fields of poisonous aspect wholesome food
For our hard palates—as when Heaven doth weep
The Earth rejoices ? Why then we not made
Like the brute clods to suffer and to sleep ?
Why must we wake to feel our peace betray'd ?
'Tis that we ne'er were meant for quiet unallay'd.

XII.

We must endure, and know that we endure ;
And from that knowledge we may gather truth,
Where there is rest how we may rest ensure.
For if it is a happiness to soothe
The sorrows of mortality, and cure
Our carnal hearts of carnal misery ;
And to be happy here is to be pure ;
Then how far purer are the beasts that we,
Content to labour on, nor curse their destiny !

XIII.

It is not so : for to be dull to pain
Is to be dull to pleasure : joy and woe
Are of one essence, tho' they seem so twain,
And live but in the contrast. Who could know
Light, who ne'er heard of darkness? Who could gain,
Were not loss possible? But we should bless
The Lord of day in sunshine and in rain :
And know—the more a soul of happiness
Or woe is capable, the nearer Heaven it is.

XIV.

Then let us spare not to proclaim man's woes,
For 'tis the part of wisdom ; and may serve
To ease us of imaginary throes :
If we can probe them with unflinching nerve,
Our hardihood our lack of suffering shews,
And leaves us but the name to descant on.
But if we wince, tho'—as the proverb goes—
We may be gall'd, still something will be won ;
For Terror scowls most fierce where he is most unknown.

XV.

And there be some, the brood of Luxury,
Who dally in the sun the livelong day,
Teazing Philosophy with thoughtless glee ;
Like flies that round some stately heifer play,
And buzz to mimic the laborious bee.
For such it would be well could we impart
A passing taste of others' misery.
Sweet are the slumbers of a pamper'd heart ;
But it must wake at last,—it may be with a start.

XVI.

See how the giddy crew goes dancing on !
Gay as a tulip-bed, and just as vain :
Flaunting in many-colour'd pride ; each one
Intent to peer the loftiest of the train,
And shine above his fellow in the sun !
But while he spreads his petals to the sky,
As foreign to the dung he feeds upon,
Some slimy grub or filth-engender'd fly
Crawls o'er his dainty cheek to shame his vanity.

XVII.

Then, as in solitude, he stands unseen ;
While all around is glittering as before.
Alas ! while we so trim in festal sheen
Laugh, and make laugh—to laugh ourselves the more,
Disporting thro' the morning, noon and e'en ;
To think how many thousands pine apart,
Like wounded birds, unperch'd, unfed, unclean,
Friendless in misery, sorely doom'd to smart
For their or other's crime, for fault of head or heart.

XVIII.

I do remember, while my blood flow'd fast,
My heart a flowery paradise bedew'd
With early expectation, that I pass'd
An edifice which dazzled as it stood
Upon a silver winding stream, and cast
Therein its lovely image. Linger
I ponder'd o'er its turrets wild and vast,
Its latticed portals and rude strengthening ;
And might have felt a wish within my bosom spring—

XIX.

O that I tenanted a dome like this !
How should I bless my being !—Thus assured
I turn'd to greet its inmates. Was it bliss
I sought to contemplate ? Alas ! immured,
Like victims gather'd in Death's sacrifice,
Life's bitterest pains yet rack'd them : buried there
Oblivion soothed not, but grim Phantasies
Stalk'd hideous round, and hurl'd them to despair !
The still dark charnel-house to that an Eden were.

XX.

The portal pass'd, I reach'd a spacious hall.
Many were seated there, and many stood
In groups around, as 'twere at masque or ball ;
Some as in sadness sat, and seem'd to brood
Upon their thoughts ; some leaning at the wall
Whistled all vacantly ; some laugh'd, some wept,
Some raised a wild note, not unmusical ;
Some pacing onward still their vigils kept,
Intent on vanity ; and some for pastime slept.

XXI.

For sleep would quell awhile their demon foe :
Sleep, dreamless sleep ; our only comforter
—Oh, were it lasting—in disease or woe !
No waking spell can still the fiends that stir
In thoughts polluted temple, to and fro
Profanely revelling, when the brain is sick.
From tainted fountain tainted waters flow :
The stately oak, whose roots down-verging thick
Have reach'd the barren chalk, stands blasted to the
quick.

XXII.

As when a stranger cur may chance to stray
Within some well-stock'd kennel, at the sight
The listless hounds, that scatter'd stood or lay
In pomp of idleness, alert and light
Come smelling round in bristly pert array ;
And whine and growl a doubtful melody,
Which seems in anger much and much in play :
So me they flock'd around, as if to see
Or hear,—Who—whither bound, the intruder wight
might be.

XXIII.

'Twas then methought I read in every eye
An unknown character ; at which the blood
Ebb'd from my veins, and seem'd to leave them dry.
Aghast and humbled at the sight I stood,
And felt the weakness of humanity :
Like him who saw the hand in time of yore,
“ Thou'rt wanting in the balance.” Haply I
Was destined thus to toss thro' many an hour ;
A shiftless wreck afloat without or sail or oar.

XXIV.

Here a poor maiden, innocent as fair,
Wail'd o'er imaginary deeds of vice,
Self-doom'd to shame, self-plighted to despair :
And there forth spouted from old sunken eyes
Tears such as maidens shed o'er early care :
The wrong was fancied, but the woe was real.
Alas ! what boots it, if our sufferings are
Endured in agony, be they ideal ?
Life is a vision all : we love, hope, fear, and feel,—

XXV.

All in imagination : This the wing
On which we soar thro' regions bright and new,
Beyond our earthly tether : this the spring
By which we move more delicately true
Than the dull brutes : the mantle this we fling
Around existence, painting all the scene
With fairy tints, and the void peopleing
With images that are not, nor have been,
Save in the fine-wrought woof which Fancy spreads be-
tween.

XXVI.

And thus from day to day we grow in thought :
And thought engenders feeling ; till we live
A spiritual existence, inly wrought
With passion too intensely sensitive
For the world's converse. But the soul, o'erfraught
With its own fantasies, will often pore
Intent on airy nothing ; or distraught
Wanton in ecstasy : and grieves the more
Should sorrow supervene the more it joy'd before.

XXVII.

Oh 'twas a sight to see would burst your heart !
The grinning fool—the loathsome idiot—
The unmann'd lecher spent with nerveless smart—
The hair-brain'd caviller—the drivelling sot,
Brooding o'er nullity ! Here sat apart
Fix'd every muscle, like a thing of stone,
The image of Despair ; whom force nor art
Could move to colloquy : he seem'd as one
Whose soul was scared away, his body left undone

XXVIII.

In the first attitude of sudden fear ;
His sudden fear made lasting, and sunk eye
Glouting immedicable sadness ! Here,
The cold blasphemer rail'd—he knew not why—
And cursed his God for pastime ! Straiten'd there
The high enthusiast, his eye wild-rolling, [vere
Conversed with Heaven and Hell : while chains se-
Restrain'd his innocent limbs, his soul was strolling
In guilty frowardness beyond the steel's controlling !

XXIX.

In the mind's tempest 'tis a fearful thing
To gaze upon the wreck : reason unsensed !
Humanity unhumanized ! we bring
Our tenderest affections all condensed
To contemplate this stern admonishing ;
Our nature's degradation : whence we learn,
Despite of pride and the world's flattering,
We are not what we would be : while we burn
To mix with gods above ; while our high spirits yearn

XXX.

To cast for ever off their carnal style ;
Breaks home upon our eyes this damning truth,
And hurls us back to dust : Mark yonder vile
Spiritless lump which seems to move thy ruth :
Thy brother that ! albeit I see thee smile,—
Thy brother that ; coheir of Heaven with thee !
And all that thou canst hope or pray, the while
Thou dost aspire to immortality,
Without or prayer or hope shall coinherit he.

XXXI.

We are not of ourselves : it is a tale
Full often told but never all believed :
And wherefore should we deem the lesson stale,
If still our hearts are never undeceived ;
If still we moil, and still for ever fail ;
Yet labour on in impotence, to raise
Ourselves above our fellows ? till the frail
And treacherous staff, whereon we lean our days,
Cracks where it seem'd most strong, and all our wisdom
lays ;

XXXII.

—And all our follies. There together lie
The sane—the senseless, wise alike in death.
The disembodied spirits upward fly :
And if they cast a thought on the late breath
They breathed so full of doubt, so fearfully,
'Tis but as gamblers think on chances past ;
The stake is won ! away—the *how* ? the *why* ?
But lost it might be till the die was cast :
Then must we doubt and fear ; each throw may be our last.

XXXIII.

I stood and wonder'd at the scene of woe :
And dreamt—I wot not : 'twas a painful dream ;
And yet not all of pain. Then starting fro
I sought again the silver-winding stream
I spake before of : still it seem'd to flow
Smiling responsive to the smiling skies,
As there were nought but happiness below.
And as the landscape freshen'd in my eyes,
My heart became again a flowery paradise.

XXXIV.

But comes the time, when like an oft-strung bow
We warp to misery, and almost hate
To gaze upon a bright unfurrow'd brow;
And in our atrophy would blacken fate
With hideous and fantastic forms, which grow
Between our healthy vision and the light,
And poison all the scene : as if enow
Of monsters, real and palpable to sight,
Rose not at every turn to streak our day with night.

XXXV.

Then is it nought that unmask'd Poverty,
Shaking at Competence her matty hair,
Half hate—half envy oozing from her eye,
Stalks thro' the town with desolating air?
Hence!—haste thee,—to some ocean-cavern hie,
Where the rude fisherman his day-watch keeps,
Begging a pittance as the waves swell by:
Then stretch'd upon his weedy pallet sleeps,
Lull'd by the ruffian blast and breakers' troubled leaps.

XXXVI.

There shalt thou live unscorn'd, and haply see
Men honour thee, and teach their little ones
To call thee by the name of Liberty.
But here—where State doth rank her liveried sons,
Where wealth is honour, and would virtue be,—
What dost thou here? Suspéct of all offence!
Who here so hardy as to welcome thee?
Thee guilt-suborner! Nurse of insolence!
Parent of fell disease and filthy pestilence!

XXXVII.

Out on that word! It grates upon a chord,
Which harshly thrill'd e'en now to misery.
The darkly-treading vengeance of the Lord!
Nor less severe that it deserved may be:
For man doth crouch before th' invisible sword,
More frightened that he knows not what to fear;
And pours to Heaven propitiatory word:
Too late, poor sluggard! For the foe draws near:
Enough for thee and thine, if ye shall find a bier!

XXXVIII.

The dead alas ! can not bear out their dead ;
The living dare not enter. Mystic scourge !
One of the many, to which flesh is bred,
That sent the Reasoner to his Demiurge ;
Deeming that God was good, and would not spread
Th' intolerable ills of pain and death.
But he hath wisely learn'd at last to read
The mercy of that Hand which chasteneth ;
His day of victory—the day he yields his breath !

XXXIX.

Above the City lours a breathless gloom ;
And men seem wrapt in thought and melancholy,
Group'd at the corners, reckless of their loom,
Muttering loose accents of despair and folly :
For tidings of the hungry Pest are come !
And what need is to earn to-morrow's bread,
When it may be to-night shall bring their doom ?
Too true : before that morrow's Sun had sped,
A hundred living souls were off to join the dead.

XL.

And when came dancing forth the laughing Morn,
Her breath all freshness, and all mirth her eye,
Slow thro' the street a hundred biers were borne;
And men stood mute, and stared in ecstasy.
Unlearn'd as yet the rites of death to scorn,
Their pious kinsfolk linger'd at the grave,
And wept a long farewell. How vain—to mourn!
For ere that Sun had gilt the western wave,
Ten times that hundred droop'd,—and none was there
could save.

XLI.

The night came over: 'twas a wretched night;
Yet all did welcome it, and wish'd it long:
And when the blushing East burst forth in light,
Darkness again were mercy. For along
The porticoes no damsel tript in sight,
Tempting the ruddy morn to rivalry:
But corses, in their evening habits dight,
Lay where they fell; or in hard agony,
Propt at some pillar's base, were waiting still to die.

XLII.

And there was one half-fallen, at whose side
A dog sat watching, and anon did lick
The lips and nostrils of his lord, who eyed
His veriest faithful friend—but could not speak :
He would have said, *God bless thee!* So he died.
But when his master's well-known visage fell,
The conscious beast, till then all silent, cried
A piteous whine ! why should I shrink to tell
How he too dropt and died, who could be spared so well?

XLIII.

Here one with gliding step, as if in shame,
Stole thro' the alleys ; and across his back,
What late breathed life, and bore perchance a name,
Swung—a cold lump, unspirited and slack.
Haply some ruffian of nocturnal fame,
What none for love would venture, dared for hire ;
And slunk from daylight, like an unchaste dame :
Or, it might be, some fond heart-bleeding sire
Bore forth his own dead child, and shrunk before God's
ire.

XLIV.

That day the Pest was dread : and not a dome
But was polluted with its tainted breath.
Yet none for safety cared abroad to roam ;
But neighbour shunn'd his neighbour, as if Death
Lurk'd in his mantle. Now when night was come,
A headsman scour'd the town with cart and bell :
Alas ! of such as rose that morn at home,
A thousand more had gone to rest in Hell—
If Hell it may be call'd where souls unbodied dwell.

XLV.

In the lone suburb there was dug a pit ;
None cared to look how deep : thither he led
His melancholy wain, and emptied it ;
Too soon to be replenish'd with more dead !
Rare tales are told, be they in sooth or wit :
For man—strange man doth sport with bitterest
But I will pass what abler pens have writ : [woe !
Full well the fabling Florentine we know ;
The Athenian's tale-like truth ; thy truth-like tale, De Foe.

XLVI.

Yet read once more that philosophic page,
Wherein the native colours of man's soul
Attest the wants of an untutor'd age.
How then at Athens Lust without controul
Walk'd forth in insolence and lawless rage :
And deem'd it folly to be good and wise,
While died alike the good, ill, simple, sage :
And none regarded human penalties,
Evict at once of life and all life's miseries.

XLVII.

And thus they reckless lived and hopeless died :
First of the world in wisdom and in wit !
As untaught sailors meet the whelming tide,
And grin at death in their hyæna fit.
Come let us eat and drink, they madly cried,
And ransack life the little while we last :
'Tis but a day ; and who would hoard aside,
Doom'd on the morrow to eternal fast ?
Come let us feast our fill, ere yet the day be past.

XLVIII.

Where then wast thou, my Plato? Thou didst go
As erst in Academia, teaching there
The heavenly wisdom of thy portico.
'Tis said, the unmaster'd Pest turn'd back for fear,
Awed at thy manly form and godlike brow :
There wast thou teaching man philosophy :
The rule—the end, of life—of death to know ;
To live for others, for himself to die :
But few were ripe to hear of immortality.

XLIX.

We too have seen a Plague, not known of old ;
May our sons know it but by our report !
From the far banks of Ind o'er bog and wold
It crept thro' Asia, in malignant sort ;
And, as some wolf invades a distant fold,
Leapt into Europe. We did crouch and pray :
Then in our craftiness would fain be bold,
And thought to purify our outer clay :
Alas ! a sea were small to wash our guilt away.

L.

It was a monstrous fiend, a scourge of Hell,
That seized its victim with a poison'd fang,
And griped him at his vitals. Down he fell,
Death-struck, and writhing with convulsive pang !
A moment—like a blighted asphodel,
He shrunk and blacken'd, and 'twas past to save :
For up his tortured limbs, I groan to tell,
The deadly cramp roll'd gathering like a wave,
And hurl'd him all unshrived and shrieking to his grave.

LI.

At this late hour how fares the soul of Man,
While his poor flesh so sorely travaileth ?
Is it in hope or fear, with joy or pain,
He waits upon the brink of present death ?
Alas ! his weakness ever is his bane !
Tho' credulous of Heaven and heavenly meed,
He dreads to meet what still he hopes to gain.
But think not I would dare to charge his creed :
Himself—himself alone must answer for his deed.

LII.

There is a something in this land of woe,
A chain that links the woefullest to life :
There is a something whither we must go,
That makes us doubt of bliss, and whispers strife.
Time customs us to love the things we know—
Morn, noon, eve, night, the earth and skies above :
Perchance some little paradise below
Holds our heart's own, in living gage for love :
These shall remain ; but we—ah ! whither do we move ?

LIII.

Down—down into the vault ! We know no more.
Of life's full ocean this the narrow port !
To lie becalm'd of all that stirr'd before ;
Nor breeze nor billow there ! No love, no sport,
No dainty luxury, no treasured store !
To moulder in th' uncomfortable grave ;
Or chrystallize to elemental ore !
This all we know of Death. Yet HOPE would save ?
It is a fearful hope—but it is all we have.

LIV.

And oh! the hope, when spilt life's few sweets lie,
To cast its bitter too;—to want, to fear,
To drudge, to pine, to sicken, and to die!
The price Man barter for his native cheer.
Then, as by Nature quit too easily,
Himself must needs arise to work his ban:
And, to fulfil his own anomaly,
While nought but happiness he feigns to plan,
His most malignant foe, his bitterest curse, is Man!

LV.

See Pride and Hate and Malice studying woe;
And Envy restless at her neighbour's ease;
And wild Ambition crying for a foe;
And fiendish Discord souring milky Peace;
And Treachery meditating midnight blow:
And Pseudo-freedom brawling *liberty*;
Rearing herself to trample others low!
Alas! that none should be so nobly free,
But that he grudges some to be as free as he!

LVI.

The stake—the rack—the pale—the cross—the cage !
Is aught of heaven-inflicted pains like these,
Which Man hath learn'd in his advancing age
Of arts and polity and sciences,
And, I must speak, religion—or each page
Of history would gape to prove the lie ?
Poor Man ! for whom religion fires to rage ;
Whose art contrives his worst of misery ;
Whose polity is strife ; whose science points awry !

LVII.

For 'tis his hard infirmity to turn
Good into evil—evil into worse,
And still to doubt his frailty ; slow to learn
The bitter truth of his ancestral curse.
Thus warrior still must slaughter, bigot burn,
For dubious treaty or for mystic creed :
Thus tyrant still Man's native rights must spurn,
While goodlier creatures for his follies bleed ;
As many a wholesome flower is choked by baneful weed.

LVIII.

Hark ! floating down the swelling Vistula
There came a cry—the watch-word of the free :
And Ocean smoothed his wrinkled brow that day,
And smiled upon his island progeny,
Light-sprinkling at their feet his merry spray.
Then Britain bless'd her sea-girt heritage,
And thought upon those days, not far away,
When she herself did Freedom's battles wage :
O that such battles lived but in historic page !

LIX.

'Twas not the rabble roaring for a meal ;
'Twas not the fury of barbaric lust ;
Nor e'en the maddening cry of untaught zeal ;
Nor curb'd Ambition pawing at the dust :
But Patriots firing for their country's weal
Sigh'd o'er her wrongs and shouted—*Liberty* !
While Kosciuszko's spirit ruled the peal.
In sooth it was a gallant band to see—
Young, beautiful and brave ! Why might not such be
free ?

LX.

Well were they train'd to musket, sword, and spear—
The glorious company ! nor unrenown'd
For those soft virtues that make glory dear.
And some their naked brows with laurel crown'd
Came there to lay them on a soldier's bier.
Oh ! if, amid the mass of general wrong,
The partial Muse may claim a selfish tear,
'Tis when a venerable sire of song
Deserts her quiet haunts for war's ungentle throng.

LXI.

Alas ! for what ? The tyrant's robber swarm
Rose like a deluge o'er the ripen'd crop :
While sister Nations sat and watch'd the storm,
Nor stretch'd a hand their falling kin to prop.
Just God of Heaven ! Thine almighty Form
Rides on the blast : and be thy power adored !
But why this soul of fire, this iron arm,
This breast with free and virtuous purpose stored ?
Such were not given to all to serve one single lord ?

LXII.

Warsawa ! how thy childless agony
Cuts to my soul ! But 'twas a mortal crime .
In tyrant's ear to speak of liberty !
And ill didst thou requite it, at that time
When thy own monster-progeny did vie
With the fierce Pestilence, and fiercer foe,
To tear thy bowels ! Wherefore must thou lie
In desolation : while thy children go
Seasoning the crust of want with the salt tears of woe.

LXIII.

From far Siberian wilds I hear a voice
As of a thronging multitude, where all
Are mingling with confused and hurried noise,
And still unanswer'd to their kindred call !
Ah ! mothers ; quiet ye : your orphan boys
Far, far away go weeping. Know ye not,
A vanquish'd people are a victor's toys ?
The game he plays is terror's antidote :
Fain would he kill ; but blood his dainty fame might
spot.

LXIV.

O for those days, when the victorious sword
Itself wrought out its work of misery !
Now, murder, thou art grown a gentle word,
Since men refined have thought of policy :
That book of Hell with heavenly phrases stored ;
Whose end is selfishness, whose art to blind !
Oh Machiavelli ! why would'st thou afford
An easy lesson to the dullest mind ?
Thou pimp of tyranny ! thou traitor to thy kind !

LXV.

Still life has hope ? for hope lives everywhere,
Above the grave.—Then is it hope of Heaven ;
For all on earth must be despair—despair.
Sister from sister, child from parent, riven !
I see them hounded from their native lair,
Reft, and unchristen'd of their very name,
And cipher'd like a mountain-herd ; for fear
In after-years the friendly breath of Fame
Should fan in kindred breasts love's half-extinguish'd
flame !

LXVI.

But mothers, up! avenge your widow'd bed !
Still may ye hope to teem with hearts of fire :
And ye, soft maids, beshrew your maidenhead !
Unlearn your softness, and go—wed for ire !
So may ye hope to rear a savage breed,
Conceived in wrath and nursed with milk of hate,
To wreak your wrongs upon the tyrant's head.
And take this comfort in your orphan state :
Vengeance will come at last, nor less severe if late.

LXVII.

Vengeance—and war ! Old Satan's savage jest
He long hath play'd upon this world of fools !
Who rush to slaughter with a poison'd zest,
And plume themselves to be a tyrant's tools :
Tyrant?—perchance a madman—dolt—or beast :
Their haughty lord perchance his own poor slave !
All starr'd and ribbon'd see his heartless breast,—
To tell how somewhere, o'er the land or wave,
Some thousand gallant boys dropp'd weltering to their
grave !

LXVIII.

Say, History,—for what? Six thousand years
Might well have taught us wisdom, would we pluck
The fruit well-water'd by our fathers' tears!
But 'twere less hard to fix the wheel of Luck,
Or learn us music with another's ears.—
Peace must be wiped then from the bloody dirk?
Good Heaven! since men in Shinar sharp'd their
To the last thrust of Spaniard, Russ, or Turk, [spears,
What peace e'er came of war to recompense the work?

LXIX.

Since Plato taught in Academus' grove,
Or He, I dare not name, in Galilee
Whisper'd his scheme of universal love,
How many million souls in agony
Of strife have parted for the rest above!
Warring for peace! Then peace is won to-day?
And Truth and Right in kind alliance move,
And wonder at the fury of past fray?
Look out, Philosopher; cast round the world—and say:—

LXX.

These twice ten centuries of war and hate—
What have they compass'd? Are men now more just
Than Aristides then?—More wise of late,
Than Socrates of yore?—More sure of trust
Than erst Epaminondas?—Nobly great
Than Pericles?—More eloquent than then
Demosthenes?—Ah no! Degenerate
From year to year—the dregs of former men,
We write, speak, think and feel!—Oh! when to rise
agen?

LXXI.

When Hate shall yield to Friendship, and the clang
Of discord melt to gentle harmony.
Meanwhile—must Passion barter pang for pang;
Take curse for curse, and envy Apathy:
And Calumny must glance her viper fang,
Gangrened herself at core. O Happiness,
It was not of this world, as poets sang,
Thine island-domicile: that world of bliss
Lived in their hearts alone, which felt the woes of this.

LXXII.

But on the rub of fortune Man may whet
His blunted energies, if he be wise ;
And of his tribulation temper get
To steel his soul for heavenly enterprise.
The sapling winter'd amidst frost and wet
Casts the gray canker from its hardy rind,
The parasitic brood of drought and heat :
Then, when the year springs, bursting unconfined,
Glow with full-blossom'd hope, the glory of its kind.

END OF BOOK III.

ELEUSINIA ;

OR,

THE SOUL'S PROGRESS.

BOOK IV.

AGE.

At illa quanti sunt, animum, tanquam emeritis
stipendiis libidinis, ambitionis, contentionis,
inimicitiarum, cupiditatum omnium, secum
esse secumque vivere.

DE SENECTUTE.

ARGUMENT.

- i. The grave prospects of age. ii. Metaphysical curiosity. iv. A scheme of the progressive Creation and order of the material universe—Dead—Vegetable—Animal. viii. Speculation on the Animal Generations. x. The Creation of MAN—His strange and capricious nature. xiv. The progress of Truth. xvi. The Poet covets skill to express his ideas of the human soul. xvii. Man's soul compared to a prisoner reading at his lattice. The illustration continued. xx. Reflections on the soul's attachment to the body, even to the deeming itself a portion of it. xxii. Our Doubt, as to what is imperceptible to our senses. xxiii. Ignorance of superior creatures an universal law. xxiv. Meditations upon Man's individual Nothingness. xxix. His consolation. All finite beings bear the same relation to infinity. xxxiii. His superiority over the other creatures of the earth, by the bounty of his Maker. xxxv. The Corporeal Structure of Man—The seat of the Soul—The forehead—the brain—the nerves—A scheme of their operations. xl. The embodied Soul's capability dependent on the particular structure of its body's organs. xli. The vibratory system. xliii. The unpoetical nature of the subject. xliv. The affection of Sleep. xlvii. Of Dreaming. l. Man's fallibility—Miscalculation of the future—and vain pursuits. lii. The ambitious. liii. The fastidious. liv. The social. lv. The luxurious. lvi. The learned. lviii. The religious. lx. Invocation of Death. lxi. The Poet's address to his Soul.—On its estate after death. lxiii. His vision of futurity. lxxiv. He wakes again upon the world—Repents his waste of time. The folly of Poesy. lxxvii. Imaginary distress. lxxix. Necessity for manly exertion to merit the consideration of men.



ELEUSINIA.

BOOK IV.

AGE.

I.

[speed.

MEANWHILE the years creep on in silent
Past is the season of young jocund sport,
And woe has temper'd thought and word and deed:
Nature now calls in more inviting sort:
All else is vain, to one who soon must speed
To greet her in her mansion of the sky.
Our's be the peril then, and our's the meed,
To gaze upon divine Philosophy:
That many fail to see, be our's the more to try.

II.

How many thousand things we dream not of
Are floating in the subtile fields of space !
For us unseen, impalpable they rove ;
But not the less existent : in each place,
Clear—dark—remote or near—below—above,
There is, Whose eye can see, Whose hand can feel !
In Him they have their being and live and move.
Man watches, like a hungry thief, to steal
From His abundant store, and snatch unproffer'd meal.

III.

What is he? wherefore? whence? and whither bound?
He ponders o'er the thought ; nor pondering knows.
Still let him search, till truth be somewhere found.
In vain ! he strains his soul with diverse throes :
Its pains are all abortive. Cast around—
Thousands are hunting in the self-same place,
The pack is well to mark the foremost hound :—
But thousands open foremost in the chase ;
All the same game pursue, and all lead different ways !

IV.

In the beginning—if I so may write
Where no beginning was—God was alone,
The Principle of Reason, infinite,
Omnipotent—tho' deed there yet was none,
Object of hearing, feeling, thought or sight—
Spontaneous holding in his unwrought will
The elements of matter, life, and light,
The bounds of time and place. Then all was still;
Motion was yet unwoke, and Silence drank her fill.

V.

[were made
God spake :—The Word went forth—and straight
Creatures innumerable. In th' blank of space,
The throne of his infinity, was laid
World upon world in order, fixing place
And moulded out of nothing. Then He said—
Be rest and motion, light, heat, life, and food
For plant and breathing body :—all obey'd.
And when each thing with being was endued,
The Spirit of God went in, and saw that it was good.

VI.

Then all was set to work in harmony :
Stupendous harmony ! The planets turn'd
Upon their axles, and were sped to fly
Beyond infinity—but the Spirit yearn'd
Within their bowels, breathing sympathy
From the brute masses ; which anon were bound
Each to the other by a living tie,
A soul of fellowship : and to the sound
Of heavenly love they danced in companies around.

VII.

And o'er their bodies the same Spirit shed
Rare effluence ; and soon the naked earth
As with a garment was with verdure spread :
And from her teeming womb there issued forth
Shapes all distinct and organized, and fed
Upon the elements. Others too did rise
Of nobler attributes, and fashioned
With instruments of knowledge—ears, and eyes :
In such the Spirit breathed diviner sympathies.

VIII.

These of all rank and all capacity
Have been and are ; and all shall pass away,
Each to his own, as his desert may be.
For separate particles of spirit sway
These separate creatures to their destiny :
And many mansions are above, below,
Where spirits, once in bondage, now are free ;
Or glorious once in knowledge, linger now
In conscious ignorance, and straining still to know.

IX.

For of the orbs that people th' Infinite
Some are of rarer virtue, some more dense ;
And creatures live for various functions fit :
Some of poor talent ; some of stronger sense
To comprehend the Universe, and wit
To grapple with Truth's naked mysteries.
But, that their story no high hand hath writ,
Nor mouth prophetic told, it were ill-wise
Beyond terrestrial ken to stretch our aching eyes.

X.

Then in the lapse of ages Man arose :
Man—in his follies hung’ring to be wise ;
Man—thirsting to be happy in his woes !
Mysterious creature ! envious of the skies,
Yet impotent of earth ! whose conscience shews
His native excellence—whose deeds betray
His doom of degradation ! As he goes,
He puffs his honour to the face of day ;
While in his secret heart his thoughts that word gainsay !

XI.

Mysterious creature ! loftiest in his height,
In his depth basest of all earth-born things !
Now soaring far into the realms of light,
Devouring Heaven in his imaginings,
And thriving as an Angel ever-bright :
Now beastly wallowing in the sty of lust
He wantons in infirmity, despite
Of Nature, while with art he drugs disgust
And makes the deity play pandar to the dust !

XII.

Strange creature ! capable of truth and love,
A living trick and breathing but to rail !
Go, read the annals of his race ; and prove
An easy moral for the Theban tale—
How warriors out of earth all arm'd did move.
What find ye there but mutual hate and strife ;
How rulers tyrannized, and people strove :
Nation with nation struggling—life for life—
Man slaughtering fellow man—by sabre, axe or knife !

XIII.

Look at the beasts, birds, fishes, trees and flowers ;
They bow to Nature and good vassals are :
They live and generate at their proper hours,
True to their God, divinely regular.
Man—man alone, who vaunts his giant powers,
A godlike reason, and an angel's form,
Alone on earth his Maker's glory lowers,
And plays such antics while the day gleams warm,
As if the wrath of Heaven ne'er wing'd an evening storm.

XIV.

But these will pass away : for it must be
That Truth shall rise and vindicate her own.
Is she not up e'en now ? Methinks I see
A form of beauty wandering up and down,
And little mortals dogging her ; but she
Glides from their grasp : and now in weary guise
Methinks she's couch'd within a branchy tree ;
Half veil'd, half visible : and there she lies
In leafy bashfulness, and shuns their prying eyes.

XV.

And graven on the bark I seem to read—
THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE ! MOUNT WHO WOULD BE WISE.
Ah me ! how hopeless for that pigmy breed
To scale a trunk of such leviathan size !
One plants a ladder—others mount with speed ;
One drives a peg beyond—one ties a cord—
One lops a bough that seem'd th' ascent to impede :
And as they bicker each to be preferr'd,
A host stands idling by, and lends uncostly word.

XVI.

O that I now could body forth a scheme
Of my soul's energies : for I have ponder'd
In silence and in secret o'er the theme ;
'Till like a frightened child I stood and wonder'd,
And doubted all things—be they what they seem,
Or empty magic conjured in the air,
The vision of an all-absorbing dream
In the soul's feverish bondage, damn'd to fare
On carnal elements, and rack'd with carnal care ?

XVII.

A prisoner reading at his lattice-grate
Pores o'er imaginary scenes, and sighs
For the broad day : still while he moans the fate
That pens him there—yet blest be Heaven, he cries,
For this faint gleam that gilds my dark estate :
Else were it dark indeed ! 'Tis thus man's soul,
Coop'd in the flesh this drear novitiate,
Peeps at Truth darkly thro' each jealous hole,
And cheers its hours awhile till it may 'scape controul.

XVIII.

His bondage o'er by lapse of years, or grace,
The weary prisoner, panting for the light,
Yet half has learn'd to love that gloomy place,
And lingers in the vestibule, despite
Of all its wretchedness; while warm tears chase
Adown his furrow'd cheek. The grate, the book,
The stone-hewn seat, the gaoler's rugged face
That ne'er was known to cast a pitying look,
Th' uneasy pallet stretch'd within the accustom'd nook;—

XIX.

These were his world: and he had learn'd to slake
His yearning from the cup of misery;
And in his destitution he would make
An idol of short-lived necessity,
And worship Bondage for fair Freedom's sake.
Thus the poor captive Spirit hugs its chain,
And watches in its cabin's sad opaque
For shadowy gleams of joy, and deems them gain:
How should it rather curse the fetters that restrain!

XX.

Alas poor Spirit ! to be mew'd up here
In this dark hut, ill-knowing whence or why,
Till thou hast unlearn'd liberty, and fear
To walk again beneath thy native sky !
To grow so friendly with thy prison cheer,
So all forgetful of thyself and home,
That e'en thy ransom costs a parting tear !
And would'st thou drag with thee thy puppet-loam ?
But nought of earth can be where thou may'st hope to
come.

XXI.

Poor Spirit ! to be so minutely knit,
So link'd and wedded with this thing of death,
As e'en to deem thyself a piece of it,
And build thy fortunes on its fleeting breath !
We contemplate the work : how exquisite !
How wonderfully true ! how passing fair !
We seek the throne of state where thou may'st sit ;
We hope to find thy particle of air :
Then while we search in vain, we doubt if thou be there !

XXII.

We doubt ! it is the curse of man below
To live in doubting and in doubting die :
What—must he doubt, because he may not know ?
What—may not truth be wrapt in mystery ?
Yes : but where faith is there must doubt be too :
And nought but faith can be beyond our sense,
Of things we see not. Still they may be true.—
For man's poor doubts, man's baffled arguments
But prove the littleness of man's intelligence.

XXIII.

There is a scale of animated things ;
And for each grade there is a silent law :
A law which in our secret senses rings,
And fills the bosoms of the wise with awe.
Superior essence foils inferior beings.
Down may ye look and ponder all below ;
But would ye soar in your imaginings,
Strive as ye will it is not given to know :
Then wait content awhile, till ye may thither go.

XXIV.

Here let me pause, and meditate alone.
Among the thousand thousand mortal men
That habit this vast earth, I am but one;
One among myriads! Let me think agen:
How many myriads more have lived, and gone
Before where I shall go, since Time ran first!
And in the aftercourse that Time shall run,
How many more shall live and go as erst!
But I of these? O Pride, go swell thee, till thou burst!

XXV.

But *one* in this immense and endless crowd!
Earth! thou art boundless; vast beyond compare!
Now Night hath wrapt thee in her solemn shroud,
I wander forth to honour thee. How far
From pole to pole! Oh, Thou alone be proud.
I but an insect am—a mite to thee!
One of the myriads on thy huge back strow'd;
Who mete thee out, as they thy lords would be!
But Thou hast swallow'd all—as thou wilt swallow me.

XXVI.

The silent Moon, that watches at thy side,
Thy handmaid is, to tend thy sleeping hours ;
Till from the east the bright-hair'd Sun shall ride,
Thy chamberlain, to deck thee out with flowers.
How art thou glorious ! beautiful as wide !
But lo ! thy sister planets beaming bright !
Whate'er thy glory they must sure divide,
Begirt with many a noble satellite
As learned men have found who watch the fruitful night.

XXVII.

And mark yon glittering tenants of the blue,
Millions on millions like descending snow,
Now melting there into a milky hue
They fill the void of Heaven's o'erreaching bow ;
My swimming vision faints beneath the view.
The stars ! those myriad stars, that seem so small,
They be huge suns, and centre planets too :
System on system piled and peopled all !
Earth ! what is Earth of these ?—An evanescent ball.

XXVIII.

God of my fathers ! What, and where am *I* ?

Nothing on nothing wandering, and lost !

A bubble of the ocean-froth ! a fly !—

A shadowy fly in the vast whirlwind toss'd !

I—who was wont to boast my breed so high

In the creation, and to flaunt, and swell,

And name myself akin to Deity !

What and where am I ? In my time-worn cell

I sit, and forge a Heaven, where I may ever dwell !

XXIX.

Heaven I—a nought of Earth !—It may be so.

Be man a thing of nought : this planet Earth

An evanescence :—what is nought ? and how

Can evanescence be, but by the dearth

Of apprehension ? Great, small, high, and low,

One with another, make up infinite.

But what is *infinite* ? I fain would know :

'Tis smooth to syllable, and fair to write ;

But think on it : think—think ! the thought—itwhelms
us quite :

XXX.

Till back we flounder to the shoals of sense.
By it seem all things equal—nothing all.
Yet weigh them—measure them : we gather thence,
Light weighs not heavy ; great o'ermeasures small,
And is whatever is : then ask ye, whence
All seem'd to vanish by infinity ?
'Twas by the lack of your intelligence :
As the stars vanish to your feeble eye,
While the transcendent Sun rides vaulting in the sky.

XXXI.

How easy is it for mere mortal wit
To symbolize immortal attributes !
Omnipotent ! eternal ! infinite !
We lisp them as each poor occasion suits ;
But their rough shadows unproportion'd flit
Before our reeling mind, which strives in vain
To grasp their forms ; they seem to welcome it,
But multiply themselves again—again ;
As wave on wave rolls still—still shoreward from the
main.

XXXII.

But He who, in his plenitude of might,
Fill'd at a word the dark void firmament
With unextinguishable orbs of light ;
Who rolls their myriad planets, and hath lent
His living essence to direct them right ;
Who moves the elements, and breathes his spirit
To vivify god, angel, man, and mite ;
That star, this mustard-seed ! what creature merit
Of size—shape—beauty—breed, shall claim of Him to
inherit ?

XXXIII.

Still grace shall be for all, abundant as
The dews of evening and the beams of morn ;
And not a sparrow shall unnumber'd pass.
A puny sparrow ! think it not in scorn ;
But man's more worth let gratitude confess,
And virtue justify. What tho' he be
Vile as the worm and withering as the grass :
Hath he not learn'd to compass earth and sea ?
To count the bygone years, and guess at destiny ?

XXXIV.

What, be he tether'd on this plain of Earth ;
Hath he not stray'd into the boundless sky ?
Traced out the planets' orbits, mark'd their girth,
Conversed with Heaven and heavenly mystery ?
Hath he not minuted the comet's birth,
Noted its law, and fix'd its fearful ways ?
So let him rise and vindicate his worth :
But His be all the glory, His the praise,
Who made him as he is, and guards his nights and days.

XXXV.

How beautiful is every flesh-built frame
That lives and moves ! Man's how surpassing all !
His form erect, his lineaments proclaim
His lordship : from his eye's quick-glancing ball
Flashes his soul, and tells from whence it came.
Mark his broad front ; within that breast doth swell
A heart all glowing with celestial flame :
But in his wide-drawn forehead—there doth dwell
The monarch of the whole, the godlike particle.

XXXVI.

Exiled from Heaven it found a welcome there ;
A mansion fitted for its hiding-place
While damn'd upon the ungenial earth to fare.
And there it makes itself a home, and plays
The comedy of life. How passing rare
The texture of its dwelling ! From the brain
Hard by its throne of state forth issuing are
The creatures of its will—a glassy train ;
The ministers of sense—of pleasure or of pain.

XXXVII.

Thence thro' the whole domain they branch away,
And speed intelligence from far and near
To th' council-seat, if aught external may
Befall them, watching at the eye and ear.
The thrilling news darts—like a solar ray—
Up to the chamber of the brain, where sit
The full divan : and each idea they weigh,
And, be it light, reject or barter it ;
But hoard for future use what worthy seems and fit.

XXXVIII.

Meanwhile the hungry Soul within a nook
Sits darkling, like a spider at her toil,
And feeds upon the daily-gathering stock.
It is a curious pastime to recoil
Within one's self, and study in the book
Of our own constitution : 'tis a theme
Peculiar for our task. What boots to look
At old Lycurgus' or Justinian's scheme?
We bear a code within would more our pains beseem.

XXXIX.

When first it enter'd there—a desert hut
Blank and unfurnish'd as a fresh-piled mound,
The Soul lay torpid for a while, and shut
From living converse : but experience found
A clue to wisdom ; and dispatch'd about
Purveyors of knowledge, whence it might be wrought
By filtering thro' the turbid mesh of doubt,
And on the pure distilment feeding thought :
Oh that at such a price it were securely bought !

XL.

But varied is that chamber of the brain,
And varied is that mansion of the Soul,
In size and capability of gain,
In fashion, as in beauty. And the whole
Is sub-assign'd to many a separate clan,
Who in their own departments minister
To their ability, as best they can.

But oft they lie all cramp'd and loth to stir,
Listless and powerless howe'er the will may spur.

XLI.

For—grant an object to discuss—anon
In delicate vibrations to and fro
With tremulous zeal the little parties run.
But if the myriad synod Fate should stow
Within too narrow bounds, they lie foredone,
Numb'd as if Sleep or Death had sapp'd their power.
So, should o'erwork or violence strain or stun,
On the sad Soul delusive counsels shower,
Like howl of crannyng wind that haunts the shatter'd
tower.

XLII.

Thus the Soul's faculties, which men call mind,
Are prone to manifold affections : first,
The brain within too narrow room confined,
They loiter sluggard-wise : then, be it curst
By toil or malady, they hurry blind
And reckless of the truth ; while the poor Soul,
Like unhelm'd vessel scuttling in the wind,
Drives on in error desperate of controul,
Pitied of men or scorn'd, where'er the wild waves roll.

XLIII.

It is a task of pain to drag the Muse
From her own fairy-land of opening flowers,
To plod upon the leaden soil of prose.
There let grave schoolmen wrangle out the hours,
Point jargon phrase and syllogistic ruse.
The poet's spirit sickens as he treads
The dusty paths that drudging sophists use :
Still will he on ; and o'er these cold dry beds
Cast, as he lags along, a handful of fresh seeds.

XLIV.

When mute obstruction baffles teasing noise,
And our closed eyelids bar the passing scene;
When droop our even-purposed limbs, and poise
In their inaction, that the slack machine
No weight incumbers and no pain annoys;
Then o'er our sense a calm begins to creep,
Gradual as twilight; then our pictured joys
Fade like the red clouds, and warm heart-dews steep
Our brain in still suspense: Hail, gentle Power of
Sleep!

XLV.

Sleep! the mind's nurse! the heart's soft opiate!
The couch of thought! the balm of agony!
Physician universal in the weight,
Fancied or real, of human misery!
This incubus of flesh to alleviate
Second to none, but Death—thy counterpart
In all, save thine inconstancy;—tho' great,
Great is that saving to a bleeding heart:—
Sleep! wondrous Sleep! I fain would know thee what
thou art.

XLVI.

How fearless do we press into thine arms,
Escaped from bus'ness, pleasure, sloth or strife !
Then is there nought of terror in thy charms ?
To lie in blank forgetfulness of life,
Heedless of all that vigilance alarms,
Foreclosed of love and elegant desire,
And hope—the daystar that our spirit warms !
Perchance incontinence of thought may fire
Th' indignant Soul to strife and unavailing ire :

XLVII.

For as, when blustering winds have sunk at last,
And Silence stoops to brood upon the trees,
Still lags a remnant of the sturdy blast,
And the lake curls beneath a passing breeze ;
Thus, when our limbs in weariness are fast,
Some strong vibration lingers on the brain ;
Or hot distemperament, or crude repast
Strikes random nerves, which thrill, and wake amain
Discordant phantasies and intellectual pain.

XLVIII.

And oft we wander desperate and alone,
Reft of our friends and breathing agony :
Or, from a rock o'er Ocean's bosom grown,
We watch the bark where all our treasures lie
Toss'd like a weed, and hear th' imploring moan
Of some loved comrade : and a form more fair,
More fragile than the rest—half seen, all known—
It is—it is ; my life's life ! pale and bare
Amongst that ruffian crew ! my own ! how came she there ?

XLIX.

She sees me—yes, me ! me ! hah there—a sign !
She points the crew—the billows ;—beckons me !
I stand o'er-leaning where the passionate brine
Spends its check'd rage in foam :—Can that be he ?
His was no heart to see me here, and pine
In idle pity :—help ! if it be thou.—
That voice—'tis her's ! the words like vipers twine
About my lungs ; my breath heaves thick and low.
But ah !—she sinks—my God ! my God !—then take
me too.

L.

I plunge—'tis past : it was not so : a dream
Ruffled my brain, and well nigh burst my heart.
But praised be Heaven things are not as they seem ;
And many a waking scene at which we start
Is but a day-dream : Tho' fond mortals deem
Their blotted reckonings all infallible,
While error lurks in their most darling scheme !
Their creeds of wisdom which they love so well,
They have not stood for aye : their period who shall
tell ?

LI.

O were we given to count our own few days,
And fix the fleeting certainty ! so might
We learn to point aright our erring ways ;
Nor spread our arrows on the verge of night.
But, as it is, we gather useless bays,
While cypress, it may be, is all we need.
What boots the guerdon of man's sunshine praise,
Of woman's love, or labour's golden meed ?
The grave is mute and cold, and there base worms do
breed.

LII.

Man the ambitious! Man the rich—the proud—
The king—the conqueror—the half a god!
On his last couch his haughty neck is bow'd :
Where now the pomp of his imperious nod?
His eye so passionate, his voice so loud,
His lordly form, his majesty of mien?
All—all is gather'd in a homely shroud :
And humblest varlets, late to serve too mean,
Stand cover'd round and talk their will,—unheard, un-
seen!

LIII.

Man the fastidious—the fair—the vain!
Who minced on tiptoe o'er the ugly soil,
Lest his trim soles the common earth should stain!
Who bathed his skin with aromatic oil!
For whom bare Nature was too coarse and plain!
Where now his delicate limbs—his perfumed breath?
And doth he still that dainty taste retain?
Go to yon fresh-piled sod—he lies beneath :
Dig; ope the coffin; doff the shroud;—and ask of Death!

LIV.

The social man ! The lover and the friend !
Man the respected, honour'd, and beloved !
A crowd stood round, and wept to mark his end ;
Then follow'd where the slow hearse sadly moved.
Happy ! whose dying virtues still shall blend
With living sympathies : he rests in peace !
Past but a few short years—days—hours, I wend
To his once-genial haunt :—there rolls at ease
A selfish spendthrift heir ; nor e'en himself can please.

LV.

Man the luxurious ! who lives for life ;
Whose heart's his own, and soul is in his store :
Whose all but indolence is nought but strife ;
Whose death—what is it, but to live no more ?
Then let him live, and let his days be rife
With love and merriment, where care is none :
He plans a paradise, he weds a wife,
He lives :—but ere his life is well begun,
Knocks at the door grim Death :—a pause—and he is
gone !

LVI.

Man the Philosopher : the learn'd, the wise !
Whose faith is reason, and whose God is mind !
He stands on earth and strains his aching eyes
Full at the Heaven of Heavens, that he may find
The golden treasure lock'd for centuries.
He wanders on the solitary shore ;
With giant Ocean feigns to sympathize ;
And dreams himself not cast of common ore,
But one of millions made for millions to adore.

LVII.

Yet Death hath swept him from his dream of pride :
It may be, Ocean overwhelm'd his bosom-friend—
As the hot Thunderer consumed his bride
In her devotion ;—such might be his end :
And Earth has drunk his ashes ; or the Tide
Has cast him to her graceless progeny :
One of the million too has lived and died,
His simpleness his sole philosophy :
How differ now the twain?—Can Learning answer me?

LVIII.

Man the religious ! See him humbly bow
Before the invisible Creator's throne—
The visible creation. Hark ! his vow—
'Tis his heart's offering :—*God, thy will be done !*
Come Death or soon or late, sudden or slow,
It is his birth-right, and he welcomes it.
Be it for worse or better who can know ?
Yet hopes athwart his fading vision flit,
And bring a peace at last that passes human wit.

LIX.

Such peace be mine.—Then, O mysterious power,
Death, claim thine own ; and teach me what thou art :
How gladly shall I yield this sunless tower ;
Come thou by rapid storm of head or heart ;
Or taint their renovating dews, and lower
My lingering energies by tedious dearth,
Till the spent lungs life's watchword tell no more,
But rattle out thy heralding. Then Earth
Shall take her own, for aye—or for more glorious birth.

LX.

But thou, my Soul! my only Self! my own!
Thou conscious entity that dwell'st unseen
Within this curious tabernacle, grown
To all it is, and all that it hath been,
Under thy tenure, and for thee alone;
The creature of thy servitude, the estate
Of thy inheritance, thy blood, thy bone;
When thou hast cast aside the morbid weight—
It was thy house, thy home,—tho' thou might'st scorn
or hate—

LXI.

And whither wilt thou flee for shelter then?
Where in the rude creation wilt thou hide
Thy glassy presence, till the birth agen?
For such thy faith is. Thing of fear and pride,
Ill would'st thou brook that darksome horrid den
That bards have fabled, and some priests have feign'd!
O thou poor Soul! to purge thy body's sin,
In the full dungeons of deep Hades chain'd,
While it—the sinner flesh—lies mouldering all unpain'd!

LXII.

Or must thou wait in blank forgetfulness?
Or sleep within thyself, nought hearing—seeing,
A conscious slumber, joyless, sorrowless,
Bankrupt of thought, still careful of thy being?
O thou poor Soul! whose all on earth of bliss
Was in the sport of action—hope, and love,
And admiration,—to be quench'd in this
Confest ineptitude! with sense to prove
The curse of idleness, yet impotent to move!

LXIII.

It is a fearful thought! and fearfully
Must we accomplish it.—I had a dream;
Tho' not in slumber: but my pulse beat high,
And a hot frenzy hurried me to deem
The future present, and my treacherous eye
Read wonder in the common scene around.
Was this a vision of futurity;
Or but extravagance of sight and sound,
While in its batter'd cell the pilot soul lay bound?

LXIV.

Methought I sicken'd on my weary couch,
And call'd to Death ; and, while I call'd, he came :
God ! How I shrunk from his unearthly touch ;
And cursed my tongue that had invoked his name !
And then I would have pray'd, and 'gan to vouch
My innocence ; but, ere I spake, I died.—
And in a twinkling—lo ! I felt me crouch
For shame before a blaze of light, and cried
To th' hills to cover me : but none was there could hide.

LXV.

And of my scatter'd elements there grew
A form of wondrous faculty, and clothed
My soul with fresh perception : and I knew
Myself the same I had been, and I loathed
The thought of what I was : for organs new
And unimagined pour'd upon my ken
Ethereal substances, and I did view
Bodiless natures, in their essence seen,
Such as I oft had heard doubted, or scorn'd, of men.

LXVI.

And there was Faith, and there was Charity,
And there were Justice, Purity and Love,
And Mercy, blended in sweet harmony ;
Yet all distinguishably did they move,
Like music to the ear, or to the eye
The hues of daylight. Myriads rose around,
Myriads on myriads—all aghast as I :
And Fear roll'd visible along the ground,
Like a just-bursting wave : and we were chill'd with
stound.

LXVII.

Yet Hope was there, and I did feed on it—
As water-weary sailor sucks the gale
That breathes of fruity land—more exquisite
Than sound of bubbling nectar to the pale
And bedrid fever-sick. But 'twas a fit,
A meteor of enjoyment : for anon
Closed, like an atmosphere, about my wit
The memory of myself, and 'fore me shone
Each thought I e'er had will'd, each deed I e'er had
done.

LXVIII.

Not as of erst in secret solitude
My conscience dragg'd me back to deeds of ill,
Cleansed by their bare remembrance ; while I stood
Before th' unweeting world all honour'd still,
And to myself by self-indulgence good ;
But to my new sense Truth was palpable,
And Memory spontaneous, truth-endued :
And all like glass could scan me, and unshell
The kernel of my heart. Could this, methought, be hell ?

LXIX.

Just as I seem'd to sink for fear and shame,
A trumpet spake—and in the space around
From the four corners of the world there came
Celestial essences of light and sound,
For such they seem'd, music and spiry flame,
And all the Virtues mystically blent
In perfect union : and that nameless Name
Of the four letters, from each quarter sent,
Form'd like a gathering cloud and fill'd the firmament.

LXX.

And underneath was shadow'd forth a throne
Glorious unutterably ; and a Man,
Whose human features with full godhead shone,
Sat there in majesty. Then I began
To comfort me ; for in that face alone
There was a gentleness that calm'd my fear,
A sympathy that must itself have known
Trouble like mine, and could my sorrow share :
To stranger in strange land a friend how doubly dear !

LXXI.

Then was a pause of frightful agony !
But I remember not : till, changed the scene,
I found me in that sweet society
Which erst the solace of my hours had been.
There they, who living made me loath to die,
And some, who dying left me sick of life,
Were link'd with an indissoluble tie ;
And I was with them : and our hearts were rife
With thought of bygone love, but cleansed of bygone
 strife.

LXXII.

And there were they whom I had loved unseen,
Whose flowery hearts shed fragrance far and near,
The Poets of the Earth, or such I ween
Of pure imagination and sincere,
Who ne'er had idolized a thought obscene,
In pride of genius, or for lust of fame.
And we did thrive in friendship ever-green ;
And friendship there was love by mortal name,
Purer than that of earth, tho' purer yet the same.

LXXIII.

O could I paint the hues of heavenly love,
That perfect sense of th' beautiful and good
Which souls do feed on purified above,
Tho' men scarce taste it in their purest mood !
Yearning and hope with admiration wove,
Still satisfied yet still insatiate ;
Ill like the love that feeble mortals prove,
Which flares a moment flickering against fate,
Whose ash is apathy, alas ! it may be hate.

LXXIV.

But I must rouse me from this velvet dream,
To plod again a pilgrim's path of flint :
For see, my taper sheds a murkier gleam
Than it was wont, and half my time is spent ;
And what is spent in vain would we redeem.
Too long—too long I've linger'd here in folly,
And gather'd thistles for what flowers did seem.
The garden of the Muse looks bright and holy ;
But Thought lurks there, and Pain, and blighting Melancholy.

LXXV.

Thither the heart-sick and life-weary wight
Hies for repose—but no repose is there :
For as he roams, his fancy's appetite
Pines at the sense of what he may not share,
Like feast-forbidden starveling at the sight
Of savoury viands. What is Poesy—
But to combine young elements of light,
And to substantiate in the mind's eye
Colours of unreal things in fresh variety ?

LXXVI.

And tho' the bard may wanton for a while
In ecstasy of spirit—as a steed
Broke from the baggage-wain,—anon the vile
And envious load of flesh shall clog his speed,
And fix him to the world he would beguile.
Then comes that weariness which all have known;
Tho' many welcome it with thoughtless smile,—
It may be wisely so,—while others groan
Hopeless and comfortless, and deem all woes their own.

LXXVII.

For me—if I have felt and if I feel
A burthen that belongs not to my years,
Beneath the weight no eye shall mark me reel :
But let it burst away in silent tears,
And steep my lonely pillow. I will steel
My heart before the world, and wear the mask
Of ruddy merriment ; lest gibing peal
Might answer for the aid I would not ask :
And friendly sympathy I should be loth to task.

LXXVIII.

For there be some—alas, how few! who watch
The shadows that may cloud the little sky
Of my affections, and their temper catch;
Smile to my joy, but, when I sorrow, sigh.
Ill could I brook from hearts like these to snatch
Their treasure, it might be in my caprice:
For what bear I that others may not match?
O could we scare the phantom of distress,
And thrive on all around in self-forgetfulness!

LXXIX.

Enough:—it is no season to bewail:
But manly thought and manly enterprise
Must challenge men's opinions, to entail
Upon our names the heritage of wise.
At best it is but folly to unveil
Our bosoms to the many-headed beast;
For whose tired taste e'en beauties scarce avail:
But would we cry our frailties? Shame, attest
How rather I would bear till Death shall bring me rest.

NOTES.





NOTES TO BOOK I.

STANZA III. p. 4.

And mix me with the universal All.

. . . . vivida vis animi pervicit, et extra
Processit longè flammantia moenia Mundi ;
Atque Omne immensum peragravit. *Lucr. lib. i. 73.*

Stanza XX. p. 15.

'Tis said the unwedded girl is like the rose.

La verginella è simile à la rosa
Ch' in bel giardin su la nativa spina,
Mentre sola e sicura si riposa,
Nè gregge, nè pastor se le avvicina ;
L'aura soave, e l' alba rugiadosa,
L' acqua, la terra al suo favor s' inchina ;
Gioveni vaghi, e Donne inamorate,
Amano haverne i seni, e tempie ornate.

Ma non sì tosto dal materno stelo
Rimossa viene, e dal suo ceppo verde,
Che, quanto havea da gli huomini, e dal cielo
Favor, gratia, e bellezza, tutto perde.
La vergine, che 'l fior, di che più zelo,
Che de' begliocchi, e de la vita, haver dè,

Lascia altrui corre, il pregio, c'havea inanti,
Perde nel cor di tutti gli altri amanti.

Orlando Fur. c. i.

Ariosto has gambolled in the delicate track of Catullus :

Ut flos in septis secretus nascitur hortis,
Ignotus pecori, nullo contusus aratro,
Quem mulcent auræ, firmat sol, educat imber :
Multi illum pueri, multæ optavêre puellæ.
Idem quum tenui carptus defloruit ungui,
Nulli illum pueri, nullæ optavêre puellæ.
Sic virgo dum intacta manet, dum cara suis est ;
Quum castum amisit polluto corpore florem,
Nec pueris jucunda manet, nec cara puellis.

Carmen Nuptiale.

Stanza XXXIII. p. 21.

I know that thou hast heard that Master's scheme.

Pythagoras is said to have been born at Samos, and in the eighteenth year of his age to have obtained the prize for wrestling at the Olympic games. Here it was that he heard Pherecydes the Syrian first discourse upon the immortality of the Soul, whereby he was so moved, that he commenced the study of Wisdom. [August. Ep. III. cited by Bayle in the Art. *Pythagoras*. Note (M).] After this he travelled into Chaldæa and Egypt, the birthplace of divine science. There, says Herodotus, the opinion first obtained that the soul of man is immortal, and that at the body's dissolution it enters into some other animal then coming into existence (*αἰὲλ γινόμενον*): and, when it has gone the round of all the beasts of the earth, the fishes of the sea and the fowls of the air, again enters the body of a man, and that this circuit occupied three thousand years. [Lib. II. c. 123.]

After having spent several years in these mysterious studies, he returned to his native land. Polycrates at that time governed Samos. But the philosophic spirit can never amalgamate with the breath of tyranny: and Pythagoras, though the personal friend of the tyrant, is

said to have quitted his country in disgust. It is probable that he then went to Phlius, and assumed the novel title of *Philosopher*, as is told by Cicero, on the authority of Ponticus Heraclides.

According to the same author he arrived in Italy in the reign of Tarquinius Superbus, and founded a school of philosophy at Crotona in Magna Græcia, at that time the garden of voluptuousness and vice.

Pythagoras is supposed to have been the author of the Golden Verses which are called by his name, and have been said by Hierocles to contain the chief doctrines of all theoretical and practical Philosophy, whereby man may purify himself to the likeness of God. [Bayle, Art. Pythagoras. (O).]

For an exposition of the ancient doctrine of *Metempsychosis*, and the principles on which it was founded, inasmuch as it has been so unreasonably assailed by ridicule, the reader will excuse the insertion here of three sections from the first chapter of *The true intellectual System of the Universe* :

30. And now it is already manifest, that from the same principle of Reason before mentioned, *That nothing of itself can come from nothing, nor go to nothing*. The Ancient Philosophers were induced likewise to assert the Soul's immortality, together with its Incorporeity or Distinctness from the Body. No substantial Entity ever vanisheth of itself into nothing; for if it did, then in length of time all might come to be nothing. But the Soul is a substantial Entity, really distinct from the Body, and not the mere Modification of it; and therefore when a Man dies, his Soul must still remain, and continue to have a being somewhere else in the Universe. All the changes that are in Nature, are either *accidental transformations* and different *Modifications* of the same substance, or else they are *conjunctions* and *separations*, or *Anagrammatical Transpositions* of things in the Universe; the substance of the whole remaining alwaies entirely the same. The Generation and Corruption of Inanimate Bodies, is but like the making of a House, Stool, or Table, and the unmaking or marring of them again, either different Modifications of one and the same substance, or else divers Mixtures and Separations, Concretions and Secretions. And the Generation and Corruption of Animals is nothing but *μίξις τε διάλ-λαξις τε μινεντων*, *The conjunction of Souls together with such particular*

Bodies ; and the Separation of them again from one another, and so as it were the Anagrammatical Transposition of them in the Universe. That Soul and life that is now fled and gone from a Lifeless carcase, is only a loss to that particular Body or compages of Matter, which by means thereof is now disanimated ; but it is no loss to the whole, it being but Transposed in the Universe and lodged somewhere else.

31. It is also further evidence that this same Principle, which thus led the Ancients to hold the Soul's Immortality, or its future Permanency after death, must needs determine them likewise to maintain its προῦπαρξις or *Pre-existence*, and consequently its μετενσωμάτωσις or *Transmigration*. For that which did pre-exist before the Generation of any Animal, and was then somewhere else, must needs Transmigrate into the Body of that Animal where now it is. But as for that other Transmigration of Human Souls into the Bodies of Brutes, though it cannot be denied but that many of these Ancients admitted it also, yet *Timæus Locrus*, and divers others of the *Pythagoreans* rejected it, any otherwise than as it might be taken for an Allegorical Description of that Beastly Transformation, that is made of Men's Souls by Vice. *Aristotle* tells us again, agreeably to what was declared before, ὅτι μάλιστα φοβούμενοι διετέλησαν οἱ παλαιοὶ τὸ ἐκ μηδενὸς γίνεσθαι τι προῦπάρχοντος. *That the Ancient Philosophers were afraid of Nothing, more than this one thing, that anything should be made out of nothing Pre-existent.* And therefore, they must needs conclude that the Souls of all Animals Pre-existed before their Generations. And indeed it is a thing very well known, that according to the Sense of Philosophers, these two things were always included together, in that one opinion of the Soul's Immortality, namely, its *Pre-existence*, as well as its *Post-existence*. Neither was there ever any of the Ancients before Christianity that held the Soul's future Permanency after Death, who did not likewise assert its *Pre-existence* ; they clearly perceiving, that if it were once granted, that the Soul was generated, it could never be proved but that it might be also corrupted. And therefore, the assertors of the Soul's immortality, commonly begun here ; first, to prove its *Pre-existence*, proceeding thence afterward to establish its permanency after Death. This is the method used in *Plato*, ἦν που ἡμῶν ἡ ψυχὴ πρὶν ἐν τῷδε τῷ ἀνθρωπίνῳ εἶδει γε-

νέσθαι ὥστε καὶ ταύτῃ ἀθανατόν τι ἔοικεν ἢ ψυχὴ εἶναι. *Our Soul was somewhere, before it came to exist in this present Humane Form, and from thence it appears to be Immortal, and such as will subsist after Death.* And the chief demonstration of the Soul's Pre-existence to the Ancients before Plato was this, because it is an Entity really distinct from Body or Matter, and the Modifications of it; and no real substantial Entity can either spring of itself out of nothing, or be made out of any other substance distinct from it, because nothing can be made ἐκ μηδενὸς ἐνυπάρχοντος ἢ προϋπάρχοντος, *from nothing either In-existing or Pre-existing*; all Natural Generations being but the various Dispositions and Modifications of what was before existent in the Universe. But there was nothing of Soul and Mind In-existing and Pre-existing in Body before, there being nothing of *Life* and *cogitation* in *Magnitude*, *Figure*, *Site*, and *Motion*. Wherefore this must needs be, not a thing *made* or *Generated*, as corporeal Forms and Qualities are, but such as hath a *Being* in Nature *Ingenerably* and *Incorruptibly*. The mechanism of Humane Body was a thing *made* and *generated*, it being only a different Modification of what was before existent, and having no new Entity in it distinct from the Substance: and the *Totum* or *compositum* of a Man or Animal may be said to be *Generated* and *Corrupted*, in regard of the Union and Disunion, Conjunction and Separation of those two parts, the Soul and Body. But the Soul itself, according to these principles, is neither a thing Generable nor Corruptible; but was as well before the Generation, and will be after the Deaths and Corruptions of men as the substance of their Body, which is supposed by all to have been from the first Creation, and no part of it to be annihilated or lost after Death, but only scattered and dispersed in the Universe. Thus the Ancient Atomists concluded, that Souls' and Lives being Substantial Entities by themselves, were all of them as old as any other substance in the Universe, and as the whole mass of Matter, and every smallest Atom of it is. That is, they who maintained the Eternity of the World, did consequently assert also *æternitatem animorum*, (as Cicero calls it) the *Eternity of Souls and Minds*. But they who conceived the world to have had a temporary beginning or Creation, held the coevity of all Souls with it, and would by no means be induced to think that every Atom of senseless matter and particle of

Dust had such a Privilege and Pre-eminency over the Souls of Men and Animals, as to be Senious to them. *Synesius*, though a Christian, yet having been Educated in this Philosophy, could not be induced by the hopes of a Bishoprick, to stifle or dissemble this sentiment of his mind, ἀμέλει τὴν ψυχὴν οὐκ ἀξιώσω σώματος ὑστερογενῆ νομίζειν. *I shall never be persuaded to think my Soul to be younger than my Body.* But such it seems was the temper of those times, that he was not only dispensed with as to all this, but also as to another Heterodoxy of his, concerning the Resurrection.

32. It is already plain also, that this Doctrine of the Ancient Atomists concerning the Immateriality and Immortality, the Præ and Post existence of Souls, was not confined by them to humane Souls only, but extended universally to all Souls and lives whatsoever. It being a thing that was hardly ever called into doubt or question by any before *Cartesius*, whether the Souls of Brutes had any sense, Cogitation or Consciousness in them or no. Now all Sense and Cogitation was undoubtedly concluded by them to be an Entity really distinct from the substance of Body, and not the mere Modification, Motion or Mechanism of it; *Life* and *Mechanism* being two distinct *Ideas* of the mind which cannot be confounded together. Wherefore they resolved that all Lives and Souls whatsoever, which now are in the world, ever were from the first beginning of it, and ever will be; that there will be no new ones produced which are not already, and have not always been, nor any of those which now are destroyed, any more than the substance of any Matter will be Created or Annihilated, so that the whole System of the Created Universe, consisting of Body, and particular Incorporeal Substances or Souls in the successive Generations and Corruptions or Deaths, of Men and other Animals, was according to them really nothing else but one and the same thing perpetually *Anagrammatized*, or but like many different Syllables and Words, variously and successively composed out of the same pre-existent elements or letters.

For further elucidation of the opinions of ancient Philosophers upon this subject, the Reader is also referred to the five following sections of the same work.

Stanza XLVI. p. 28.

*Were it not tedious, I could expound
The wisdom of philosophers who sift
Rare truths by handicraft.*

A full statement of the argument for the soul's distinct being, as deduced from the inert quality of matter which is ascertained by experiment, may be found in Baxter's *Inquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul*: a work of great reputation once, but now seldom read, though well worthy of the trouble. Dr. Cudworth too has alluded to it, and used this principle of Nature, viz. that no *body* can move itself, to shew undeniably that there must be incorporeal substance which has an active power of moving body. [*True intellectual System of the Universe, Chap. V. Sect. 4.*] This I understand to be the scope of Plato's reasoning, where he connects motion with mind: not so much to define thereby the nature of the latter, as to fix this one its distinctive incident, *hautokinesy*, or *active moving force*, in opposition to that corresponding incident of matter, "*vis inertię*," or *passive antimotive force*. And this is the same argument as that by which Aristotle would confute the materialists, when he says, (*Met. l. i. c. 3.*) Εἰ γὰρ ὅτι μάλιστα πᾶσα φθορὰ καὶ γένεσις ἐκ τινος ὡς ἐνός ἢ καὶ πλείονων ἐστίν, διὰ τί τοῦτο συμβαίνει, καὶ τί τὸ αἴτιον; οὐ γὰρ δὴ τό γε ὑποκείμενον αὐτὸ ποιεῖ μεταβάλλειν ἑαυτό· λέγω δὲ οἶον, οὔτε τὸ ξύλον, οὔτε τὸ χαλκὸς αἴτιον τοῦ μεταβάλλειν ἑκάτερον αὐτῶν· οὐδε ποιεῖ τὸ μὲν ξύλον κλίνην, ὁ δὲ χαλκὸς ἀνδριάντα, ἀλλ' ἕτερόν τι τῆς μεταβολῆς αἰτιον· τό δε τοῦτο ζητεῖν, ἐστὶ τὸ τὴν ἐτίραν ζητεῖν ἀρχήν, ὡς ἂν ἡμεῖς φαίημεν, ὅθεν, ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως. For granted ever so much that generation is performed of matter, whether simple or compound; by what means is this brought about, and what is the moving cause? For the subject matter cannot of itself change itself: for example, neither wood, nor brass, can accomplish its own proper transfiguration: wood can not make a chair, nor brass a statue, but something else is the cause of this change: And to seek this, is to seek another principle, (not matter); which we would call the principle from which motion originates. This argument, which amounts to a demonstration, was

universally admitted except by the Epicureans, who assumed the eternal existence of motion as an axiom—an effect without a cause. Then where there is motion there must be mind, though this by no means asserts the converse proposition.

Stanza XLIX. p. 29.

A senseless babble grates upon my ear ;

Tum porro puer, ut sævis projectus ab undis
Navita, nudus humi jacet, infans, indigus omni
Vitali auxilio, cùm primùm in luminis oras
Nixibus ex alvo matris natura profudit ;
Vagituque locum lugubri complet, ut æquum 'st,
Cui tantum in vitâ restet transire malorum.

Lucretius, v. 223.

Stanza LVI. p. 33.

For nought that is is invious to Thee.

The Reader is invited to the perusal of Bishop Berkeley's dialogues for an illustration of some of the ideas to which allusion is made in this part of the Poem.

Stanza LVIII. p. 34.

*Or, like a child whose eye hath cross'd the sun,
Stand blinded, doubting what before we saw.*

Ὁ πᾶσι φανερός δοκῶν εἶναι ἥλιος οὐκ ἐπιτρέπει τοῖς ἀνθρώποισι ἐαυτὸν ἀκριβῶς ὁρᾶν, ἀλλ', ἐάν τις αὐτὸν ἀναιδῶς ἐγχειρῇ θεᾶσθαι, τὴν ὄψιν ἀφαιρεῖται. *Xenoph. Mem. L. 4. c. 3.*



NOTES TO BOOK II.

Stanza V. p. 49.

And I will sup my fill of shadowy thought.

I have supp'd full with horrors. *Macbeth.*

Stanza X. p. 52.

*Hard by the vast and venerable pile,
Where kindred souls (if such be) still adore :
And many a traveller holds his steed awhile,
To view the dome whose strength is pillar'd in each aisle.*

It was a vast and venerable pile ;
So old, it seemed only not to fall,
Yet strength was pillar'd in each massy aisle.

Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, canto i.

Newstead Abbey, of itself a curious monument of monastic magnificence, is now hallowed by the genius of an immortal bard. It was indeed true, that, when the late Lord Byron left England, Time was making dangerous inroads upon this venerable fabric. But the elegant zeal of his successor has overmatched the barbarian, and restored these antique walls to their grand and solemn character for generations to come : while his present hospitality (to which the writer of this note is no stranger) can hardly have been surpassed by

the wealthiest Abbot who ever fattened in this pleasant valley. That it has fallen into such hands, the scholar and antiquarian must alike rejoice :

Nec te poenituit domini, divine Poeta.

Stanza XXXVIII. p. 66.

Barbarian still ! they urge the senseless dice,

Tacitus said of our German ancestors,—

Aleam, quod mirere, sobrii inter seria exercent, tantâ lucrandi per-dendive temeritate, ut cum omnia defecerunt, extremo ac novissimo jactu, de libertate ac de corpore contendunt. Victus voluntariam servitutem adit. quamvis junior, quamvis robustior, alligari se ac venire patitur. ea est in re prava pervicacia : ipsi *fidem* vocant.

De moribus Germ.

Stanza XLI. p. 67.

*There is a scripture hard and mystical,
More mystified by controverting men :*

The 9th Article of the Church of England was drawn up, after the most mature consultation of our most learned divines of that day, “for avoiding diversities of opinion, and for the establishment of consent touching true religion.” It must be remembered that their aim was to declare the doctrine of Scripture, rather than to simplify the mystery.

Stanza XLII. p. 68.

*Methinks in Adam’s fall I read a story
Of our own sinfulness in ages gone :*

It was one of the tenets of Origen that the souls of men had pre-existed, and were sent into their present bodies for the punishment of

sins committed in a former state of being. It seems a little unaccountable that he should have held this, when we consider the practical privations he was pleased to inflict upon his own body, which, taking his view of things, we must call a presumptuous interference with the dispensation of divine Justice, whether intended to aggravate or to lighten the burthensome inheritance of flesh. This is one of the several opinions contained in his *Book of Principles*, for which he was persecuted by Demetrius, the Bishop of Alexandria, in the beginning of the third century, and which, under the auspices of his followers, were condemned by imperial edicts and œcumenical councils, even to the middle of the sixth century. (See Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, and Moreri in Art. *Origénistes*.)

Stanza L. p. 72.

The bull hath horns, all gentle tho' he be.

Fœnum habet in cornu, longè fuge.



NOTES TO BOOK III.

Stanza VII. p. 92.

For Passion's scorpion sting bears its own death-wound near.

The Scorpion is said by Naturalists to have the power of killing itself by its own sting.

Stanza XIII. p. 95.

*And know—the more a soul of happiness
Or woe is capable, the nearer Heaven it is.*

Perch' io dissi : maestro, esti tormenti
Cresceranno ei dopo la gran sentenza,
O sien minori o saran sì cocenti ?

Ed egli a me : ritorna a tua scienza
Che vuol, quanto la cosa è più perfetta
Più senta 'l bene e così la doglienza.

Inferno, canto vi.

Stanza XXXVIII. p. 108.

*Mystic scourge !
One of the many to which flesh is bred,
That sent the Reasoner to his Demiurge.*

The origin of Evil has baffled human inquiry, as it always must.

Many Philosophers, from the author of the second chapter of Genesis to those of our own age, have endeavoured to account for what must still be unaccountable; though useless controversy has been much checked of late years, by the custom of conventional subscription to such salutary opinions as may not be equally evident or intelligible to individual reason. The allusion in the poem is to that opinion of Philosophers, which conceived two independent adverse Principles, one of good, the other of evil. Zoroaster is said to have taught this anciently among the Persians; (See Bayle, Art. Zoroaster.) And Plutarch was in his time so strenuous an assertor of the same doctrine, that he not only declared it as his own opinion, but insisted that all the world was agreeing with him. How far he was correct in this may be gathered from the observations of Dr. Cudworth on this subject, in his True Intellectual System of the Universe. (Chap. IV. § 13.) It is well known how deeply in the early ages of Christianity, several sects were imbued with the Gnostic philosophy. Marcion lived in the second century, Manes in the third. In the seventh, Paul renewed this heresy, which spread over Christendom to an extent which would surprise us, unless we were told at the same time of the invigorating condemnations which were breathed upon it by the orthodox. (See Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, Bayle, Art. Manichees and Art. Paulicians.) The ancient Persians called their two gods Yesdan and Ahriman, the same as Oromasdes and Arimanius in Greek; but in later ages, when the Gnostic philosophy prevailed throughout the East, asserting the general malignity of matter, the Creator of the material Universe with all its evils, (in opposition to the divine goodness, as it was said,) was called Δημιουργος, *Demiurge* or *Opifcer*. The history of this doctrine has been curiously illustrated by Mr. Maurice in his work on the antiquities of India.

Stanza XLVI. p. 112.

Yet read once more that philosophic page.

“ They had not been many days in Attica, when the plague first began among the Athenians, said also to have seized formerly on

divers other parts, as about Lemnos, and elsewhere; but so great a plague and mortality of men was never remembered to have happened in any place before. For at first, neither were the physicians able to cure it, through ignorance of what it was, but died fastest themselves, as being the men that most approached the sick; nor any other art of man availed whatsoever. All supplications to the gods, and inquiries of oracles, and whatsoever other means they used of that kind, proved all unprofitable, insomuch as subdued with the greatness of the evil, they gave them all over. It began, by report, first, in that part of Æthiopia that lieth upon Egypt, and thence fell down into Ægypt, and Afric, and into the greatest part of the territories of the king.* It invaded Athens on a sudden, and touched first upon those that dwelt in Piræus: insomuch as they reported that the Peloponnesians had cast poison into their wells, for springs there were not any in that place. But afterwards it came up into the high city, and then they died a great deal faster. Now let every man, physician or other, concerning the ground of this sickness, whence it sprung, and what causes he thinks able to produce so great an alteration, speak according to his own knowledge; for my part, I will deliver but the manner of it, and lay open only such things as one may take his mark by, to discover the same if it come again, having been both sick of it myself, and seen others sick of the same. This year by confession of all men was of all other, for other diseases most free and healthful. If any man were sick before, his disease turned to this; if not, yet suddenly, without any apparent cause preceding, and being in perfect health, they were taken first with an extreme ache in their heads, redness and inflammation of the eyes; and then inwardly their throats and tongues grew presently bloody, and their breath noisome and unsavory. Upon this followed sneezing and hoarseness, and not long after, the pain, together with a mighty cough, came down into the breast; and when once it was settled in the stomach,† it caused vomit, and with great torment came up all manner of bilious purgation, that physicians ever named. Most of them had also the hickey-

* Of Persia.

† *Kapdia*, here taken for the stomach.

exe, which brought with it a strong convulsion, and in some ceased quickly, but in others was long before it gave over. Their bodies outwardly to the touch, were neither very hot nor pale, but reddish livid, and beflowered with little pimples and wheals; but so burned inwardly, as not to endure the lightest clothes or linen garment to be upon them, nor any thing, but mere nakedness: but rather most willingly to have cast themselves into the cold water. And many of them that were not looked to, possessed with insatiate thirst, ran unto the wells, and to drink much or little was indifferent, being still from ease, and power to sleep, as far as ever. As long as the disease was at the height, their bodies wasted not, but resisted the torment beyond all expectation, insomuch, as most of them either died of their inward burning in nine or seven days, whilst they had yet strength, or if they had escaped that, then the disease falling down into their bellies, and causing there great exulcerations and immoderate looseness. they died many of them afterward through weakness. For the disease, which took first the head, began above and came down, and passed through the whole body; and he that overcame the worst of it was yet marked with the loss of his extreme parts; for breaking out both at their fingers and toes, many with the loss of these escaped. There were also some that lost their eyes, and many that presently upon their recovery were taken with such an oblivion of all things whatsoever, as they neither knew themselves, nor their acquaintance. For this was a kind of sickness which far surmounted all expression of words, and both exceeded human nature, in the cruelty wherewith it handled each one, and appeared also otherwise to be none of those diseases that are bred amongst us, and that especially by this. For all, both birds and beasts, that used to feed on human flesh, though many men lay abroad unburied, either came not at them, or tasting perished. An argument whereof as touching the birds, is the manifest defect of such fowl, which were not then seen, neither about the carcasses, or any where else: but by the dogs, because they are familiar with men, this effect was seen much clearer. So that this disease, to pass over many strange particulars of the accidents that some had different from others, was in general such as I have shewn, and for other usual sicknesses, at that time no man was troubled with any. Now they

died some for want of attendance, and some again with all the care and physic that could be used. Nor was there any to say, certain medicine, that applied must have helped them; for if it did good to one, it did harm to another; nor any difference of body, for strength or weakness that was able to resist it; but it carried all away, what physic soever was administered. But the greatest misery of all was, the dejection of mind, in such as found themselves beginning to be sick, for they grew presently desperate, and gave themselves over without making any resistance, as also their dying thus like sheep, infected by mutual visitation, for the greatest mortality proceeded that way. For if men forebore to visit them, for fear; then they died forlorn, whereby many families became empty, for want of such as should take care of them. If they forebore not, then they died themselves, and principally the most honest men. For out of shame they would not spare themselves, but went in unto their friends, especially after it was come to this pass, that even their domestics, wearied with the lamentations of them that died, and overcome with the greatness of the calamity, were no longer moved therewith. But those that were recovered, had much compassion both on them that died, and on them that lay sick, as having both known the misery themselves, and now no more subject to the danger. For this disease never took any man the second time, so as to be mortal. And these men were both by others counted happy, and they also themselves, through excess of present joy, conceived a kind of light hope never to die of any other sickness hereafter. Besides the present affliction, the reception of the country people and of their substance into the city, oppressed both them, and much more the people themselves that so came in. For having no houses, but dwelling at that time of the year in stifling booths, the mortality was now without all form; and dying men lay tumbling one upon another in the streets, and men half dead about every conduit through desire of water. The temples also where they dwelt in tents, were all full of the dead that died within them; for oppressed with the violence of the calamity, and not knowing what to do, men grew careless both of holy and profane things alike. And the laws which they formerly used touching funerals, were all now broken; every one burying where he could find room. And many for

want of things necessary, after so many deaths before, were forced to become impudent in the funerals of their friends. For when one had made a funeral pile,* another getting before him, would throw on his dead and give it fire. And when one was burning, another would come, and having cast thereon him whom he carried, go his way again. And the great licentiousness, which also in other kinds was used in the city, began at first from this disease. For that which a man before would dissemble, and not acknowledge to be done for voluptuousness, he durst now do freely, seeing before his eyes such quick revolution, of the rich dying, and men worth nothing inheriting their estates; insomuch as they justified a speedy fruition of their goods even for their pleasure, as men that thought they held their lives but by the day. As for pains no man was forward in any action of honour to take any, because they thought it uncertain whether they should die or not before they achieved it. But what any man knew to be delightful, and to be profitable to pleasure, that was made both profitable and honourable. Neither the fear of the gods, nor laws of men, awed any man. Not the former, because they concluded it was alike to worship or not worship, from seeing that alike they all perished; nor the latter, because no man expected his life would last, till he received punishment of his crimes by judgment. But they thought there was now over their heads, some far greater judgment decreed against them; before which fell, they thought to enjoy some little part of their lives. Such was the misery into which the Athenians being fallen were much oppressed; having not only their men killed by the disease within, but the enemy also laying waste their fields and villages without. In this sickness also, as it was not unlikely they would, they called to mind this verse, said also of the elder sort to have been uttered of old:

* A pile of wood, which when they had laid the corpse on it, they fired, and afterwards buried the bones.

A Dorick war shall fall,
And a great* plague withall.

Now were men at variance about the word, some saying it was not *Λοιμὸς*, i. the plague, that was by the ancients mentioned in that verse, but *Λιμὸς*, i. famine. But upon the present occasion the word *Λοιμὸς* deservedly obtained. For as men suffered, so they made the verse to say. And I think, if after this, there shall ever come another Doric war, and with it a famine, they are like to recite the verse accordingly. There was also reported by such as knew, a certain answer given by the oracle to the Lacedæmonians, when they inquired whether they should make this war, or not, that if they warred with all their power, they should have the victory, and that the god† himself would take their parts; and thereupon they thought the present misery to be a fulfilling of that prophecy. The Peloponnesians were no sooner entered Attica, but the sickness presently began, and never came into Peloponnesus, to speak of, but reigned principally in Athens, and in such other places afterwards as were most populous. And thus much of this disease."

Hobbes's Translation.

Stanza LIX. p. 118.

And Kosciuszko's spirit ruled the peal.

The Vice-roy, Grand-duke Constantine, had taken offence at the young men attending the military schools at Warsaw, because at a social meeting they had toasted the memory of Kosciuszko and other popular characters in Polish Story. *Annual Register for 1830.*

* *Λοιμὸς*.

† Apollo, to whom the heathens attributed the immission of all epidemic or ordinary diseases.

Stanza LX. p. 119.

*Oh ! if amid the mass of general wrong,
The partial Muse may claim a selfish tear,
'Tis when a venerable sire of song
Deserts her quiet haunts for war's ungentle throng.*

The venerable and accomplished Niemcewicz, the early friend of Kosciuszko, was one of the foremost who asserted the rights of his unhappy country in 1830. He was Secretary of the Senate and one of the six distinguished individuals, who were chosen to supersede the obnoxious members of the Council of Administration, after the expulsion of the Viceroy's troops out of Warsaw, on the 29th of November. Since the disastrous events which followed, he has reaped in exile the hard fruits of defeated patriotism. If grey hairs embitter the sorrows of a strange soil, if they seem to deaden hope and to foreclose all participation in the future bounties of Fortune, still let the exiled octogenarian console himself, that his troubles, though unrelieved, must soon end; let him take comfort in thinking—*Moriemur inulti, sed moriemur*. [Niemcewicz died at Paris in 1841.]

Stanza LXIV. p. 121.

*Oh Machiavelli ! why would'st thou afford
An easy lesson to the dullest mind ?
Thou pimp of tyranny ! thou traitor to thy kind !*

Chi diviene padrone d'una città consueta à vivere libera e non la disfaccia, aspetti d'essere disfatto da quella ; perche sempre ha per rifugio nella ribellione il nome della libertà, e li ordini antichi suoi, li quali nè per lunghezza di tempo nè per beneficii mai si scordano ; e per cosa si faccia, ò si provenga, se non si disuniscono ò dissipano li habitatori, non si dimentica quel nome nè quelli ordini ma subito in ogni accidente vi si ricorre . . . nelle Repubbliche è maggior odio, più desiderio di vendetta, ne li lassa, ne può lassare riposare, la memoria della anticha libertà ; tal che la più sicura via è spegnerle, ò habitarvi.

Il Principe, c. v.

If this was meant in sober earnest, it is the most inhuman doctrine that ever was broached by philosophy, the natural guardian of the rights and liberties of mankind. If it was meant as a Satire upon Tyranny, it is a strange miscalculation as to the relative influence of the tempers and the understandings of tyrants.

Stanza LXV. p. 121.

*I see them hounded from their native lair,
Reft, and unchristen'd of their very name,
And cipher'd like a mountain-herd.*

If this is not literally true, the Emperor Nicholas has been much belied in this country.



NOTES TO BOOK IV.

STANZA IV. p. 131.

*God was alone,
The Principle of Reason.*

Aristotle writes thus in the 14th Chapter (περὶ εὐτυχίας) of the 7th book of Ethics to Eudemus, λόγου δὲ ἀρχὴ οὐ λογος, ἀλλὰ τι κρεῖττον· τί οὖν ἂν κρεῖττον καὶ ἐπιστήμης εἴποι, πλὴν Θεος; *The principle of reason is not reason, but something superior: but what can we call superior to knowledge, but God?* [See the next note.] Philo Judæus says, Moses, who was a first-rate philosopher, well knew that the Creator of the world was κρείττων ἢ ἐπιστήμη. *De Mos. Cosmog.*

Stanza V. p. 131.

*God spake:—the Word went forth—and straight were made
Creatures innumerable.*

Aristotle at the outset of his work *De Partibus Animalium*, having noticed the Final Cause (τὴν οὐ ἕνεκα) of generation and the Efficient Cause (τὴν ὅθεν ἢ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως), proceeds to give the first rank to the former of these, and define it to be Reason (λόγος). His words are remarkable—φαίνεται δὲ πρώτη ἢν λέγομεν ἕνεκά τινος· λόγος γὰρ οὗτος· ἀρχὴ δὲ ὁ λόγος, ὁμοίως ἔν τε τοῖς κατὰ τέχνην καὶ τοῖς φύσει συνεστήκοσιν. I say this passage is remarkable, because nobody can read it

without being reminded of that other well known passage which is prefixed to the gospel of St. John. *Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ Λόγος, καὶ ὁ Λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ Λόγος. Οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν Θεόν. Πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν, ὃ γέγονεν.* The learned Bishop Pearson, in discussing this passage, says, in reference to this use of the word *Λόγος*, [*Exposition of the Creed*, vol. i. p. 192. 8vo. Oxf. 1820.] “St. John would teach that Christ did make the world, which was created at least four thousand years before his birth: the name of Jesus was given him since at his circumcision; the title of Christ belonged unto his office, which he exercised not till thirty years after. Neither of these with any shew of probability will reach to the Creation of the world. Wherefore he produceth a name of his, as yet unknown to the world, or rather not taken notice of, though in frequent use among the Jews, which belonged unto him who was made man, but before he was so. Under that name he shews that he had a being in the beginning; when all things were to be created, and consequently were not yet, then in the beginning was the Word, and so not created.” Again, p. 197. “Considering that the eternal God was so constantly among the Jews called the Word, the only reason which we can conceive why the Apostle should thus use this phrase.”

In a note [(e) vol. ii. p. 116.] he endeavours further to establish what is stated in the text, that the Jewish people were constantly taught that the Word of God was the same with God, and that by that Word all things were made. Which was undoubtedly the cause why St. John delivered so great a mystery in so few words, as speaking unto them who at the first apprehension understood him.

But it would rather seem that this name *Λόγος* for the Creator of the World, as well as the whole dogma there expressed, was of common notoriety amongst the metaphysical philosophers of that day, as well Heathen as Jewish, and that the writer's object was, not to establish this dogma, but to identify Jesus Christ with the eternal *Λόγος*, whose attributes were already established.

Opposed to it was the Zoroastrian doctrine of two independent Principles, which too was of the greatest antiquity, and probably current in Persia and the adjoining regions of Asia, at the time when the Jews

left Egypt: and the teachers of the pure faith seem to have insisted upon their doctrine of the Word, in order to refute the common notion of Ahriman, or the Evil Power. Thus Moses, who was thoroughly versed in all the then attainments of human inquiry (*φιλοσοφίας ἐπ' αὐτὴν φθάσας ἀκρότητα*, says Philo Judæus) goes through all the objects of the visible world with great minuteness, and particularizes the creation of each by the Word of God; describing the Deity as of bodily proportions, in order to meet the common understandings of men, which were prone to swerve from the worship of a Being, whom they were unable to subject to the apprehension of their senses. So also Solomon asserts the eternity of Wisdom abstractedly, and its immediate presence with God during the work of the creation. Proverbs viii. 22. *The Lord possessed me (Wisdom speaks) in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths I was brought forth, &c.* It is observable upon ver. 23. as also upon ver. 2. of ch. i. of St. John's Gospel, that both seem to be a repetition of what was said immediately before, as if the passages had been made up of philosophic axioms, or marginal commentaries had crept into the text. The Psalmist says, (Ps. xxxiii. 6.) *By the Word of the Lord were the Heavens made, and all the hosts of them by the breath of his mouth.* There are numerous other passages in the Old Testament declaratory of this doctrine, that the Universe was created by the Word of God, or by the Wisdom of God; all of which seem to regard the opposite tenets which have been alluded to. Jeremiah says, contrasting the Lord of Hosts with idols, *He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion. When he uttereth his voice there is a multitude of waters in the heavens, &c.*

Now nobody will deny that the same doctrine was rife among the theistical philosophers of the Heathens: though I am well aware of the distinction which is alleged as to the insufficient personification of the Platonic Logos. But is not this apparent difference merely in the style of writing: the Greek philosophers being used to express their ideas more abstractedly than the Jewish? Or perhaps we might say, the Jewish writers being used to speak objectively and meta-

phorically of the Deity, as endued with bodily parts like a man : which was perhaps owing in some measure to their poetic temperament. Plato and Aristotle both distinguish One Supreme God.—ὁ Θεός, *the God*, by way of excellence ; ὁ ἐπὶ πᾶσι Θεός, *the God over all* ; ὁ πρῶτος Θεός, *the first God* ; αὐτόθεος, *the original God* ; τοῦτε ἡγεμόνος καὶ αἰτίου πάντων πατήρ, *the Father both of the director and of the causer of all things* ; all which expressions are used by Plato of the Supreme Deity : the last is very remarkable. Aristotle says, ὁ θεός τὸ αἴτιον πᾶσιν καὶ ἀρχή τις God, *the cause and undefinable principle of all things*, (observe the force of τις) and, quoting from Homer, εἰς κοίρανος, *The one Ruler*. Now for the other two persons of the God-head, called by Plato, “the causer and director of the world of whom the Supreme God is the Father,” as quoted above, I will only refer again to that passage of Aristotle, which is partly transcribed at the beginning of this note, where he sets out to speak of the generation of the natural world. And observe the correctness of connecting these second and third characters with *creation* and the *created*. Ἐπεὶ πλείους ὁρῶμεν αἰτίας περὶ τὴν γένεσιν τὴν φυσικὴν, ὅλον τηντε οὐ ἔνεκα καὶ τὴν ὄθεν ἢ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως, διοριστέον καὶ περὶ τούτων ποία πρώτη καὶ δευτέρα πέφυκε. φαίνεται δὲ κ. τ. λ. (see above). *We see several causes employed in physical generation : for instance, the final or intending cause, and that from which motion springs, or the efficient cause : and we must distinguish of these which is first, and which second. Now that which we call the intending, seems to be first : for this is reason (λόγος), and reason is the principle as well of things composed by Nature as by Art. It is unnecessary to multiply quotations to the same effect : many are to be found in Plato.*

We may infer too that Plato's and Aristotle's ideas upon this subject were not essentially different from the Jewish, from the circumstance that Philo seems to have drawn so deeply from them. Indeed, whatever those ideas were, there can be little doubt that they owed their original conception to the conversation of the Greeks with the Jewish philosophy, or to traditionary cabala derived from the same divine source.

Therefore, I think it might be shewn—*Firstly*, That the title Λόγος, or “the Word” for the eternal Creator of the World was not taken by St. John from the Scriptures of the Old Testament in particular, or

from the subsequent style of the ancient Jews in conformity thereto, solely, as Bishop Tomline asserts, (vol. ii. p. 109.) nor indeed from any particular sect of Greek sophists; but that it was the general language of the most approved philosophy at that time, and in accordance with those Scriptures; whether it was derived from them originally, or from the same fountain, *viz.* a primæval revelation to mankind. The style carries internal evidence of the philosophic character of the Author, besides its exact coincidence with the passage quoted above from Aristotle, which was a sort of Axiom in Philosophy.

Secondly, That St. John's object was, not so much to refute the false idea of the Gnostics, by declaring the attributes of the eternal Word—which had been so often done before,—as to identify that divine character with Jesus the son of Mary; (*And the Word was made flesh, &c.*) and thereby confound the Jews, who had crucified him, not because he assumed to be the Christ, but *because he made himself equal to God.* (See Tomline's Theol. vol. ii. p. 100, as to the crime of blasphemy among the Jews.) The former of these propositions—the attributes of the eternal Word, I believe as a Theist: the latter—its incarnation in Jesus Christ, from the evidence of the Evangelists and St. Paul, as a Christian I cannot disbelieve.

The divine origin of the doctrine of a triune Godhead, and its universality among the nations of the East, though often in a form most corrupted from the original truth, has been most learnedly treated by Mr. Maurice, in his investigation of the Antiquities of India.

That there was some primæval understanding among men upon this subject which was withheld from after ages seems almost indisputable from the fact—that their minds were turned to so abstract and difficult a subject as the Essence of the Godhead, and the Creation of the Universe; in an age when human knowledge (attained by the unaided exertions of human intellect) must have been in its first infancy, and had not yet discovered the common necessities of life.

It would be curious to consider with this view, whether many of the opinions of the old philosophers do not bear a character of natural truth, which looks more like the real and perfect impression effaced and mutilated, than the unfinished and growing study of an aspiring artist. To illustrate what I mean to hint at by a single example, let us take the ancient theory of atoms. This theory was acknowledged

by most of the ancient physiologers, and was used particularly by Democritus and his followers—Epicurus and his sect, to infer the eternity of matter and the absolute non-existence of any thing immaterial. But as to the necessity of such a deduction from such a theory, and also as to the idea of atomic physiology having owed its origin to Democritus and his companions, the reader, if he pleases, may consult the first chapter of Cudworth's Book. He fairly traces it to some region of the East, and to times far older than Democritus: though it has been popularly and indissolubly connected with Epicurus and Atheism.

Now let us consider the nature of these atoms from the words of Lucretius, who united the precision of a philosopher with the fancy of a poet, to work a masterpiece of human ingenuity.

The universe, he says, is made up of minute and insensible bodies moving eternally amongst themselves in space. These are the principles of all things. By their myriad combinations they produce all the objects of the visible world. He refutes the common notion of philosophers, that fire, water, earth, and air, or any of these, are the elementary principles of things.

Quin potius tali naturâ prædita quædam
Corpora constituas, ignem si forte creârint
Posse eadem demptis paucis, paucisque tributis,
Ordine mutato et motu, facere aeris auras :
Sic alias aliis rebus mutarier omneis. Lib. i. 798.

And again, Lib. i. 814.

Nimirum quia multa modis communia multis
Multarum rerum in rebus primordia mista
Sunt, ideo variis variæ res rebus aluntur.
Atque eadem magni refert primordia sæpe
Cum quibus, et quali positurâ contineantur :
Et quos inter se dent motus, accipiantque.
Namque eadem cælum, mare, terras, flumina, solem,
Constituunt ; eadem fruges, arbusta, animanteis :
Verum aliis alioque modo commista moventur.
Quinetiam passim nostris in versibus ipsis
Multa elementa vides multis communia verbis :

Cum tamen inter se versus ac verba necesse est
 Confiteare et re et sonitu distare sonanti :
 Tantum elementa queunt permutato ordine solo.
 At rerum quæ sunt primordia plura adhibere
 Possunt, unde queant variæ res quæque creari.

Now I ask whether these beautiful lines do not in fact contain the great principle of Chemistry, which has been at last deduced by experiment, the only legitimate road to natural Science : and whether a modern Chemist could not in strictness use the same language? Now it seems to me almost impossible that this doctrine should have been a mere guess at the arcana of Nature. I would rather consider it a traditionary acceptance of what was once an evident, perhaps revealed, truth on Earth, but afterwards lost sight of by man's degeneracy, and in time grown corrupt, owing to his inability to demonstrate the accidents of matter during the infancy of human Science. It would be curious to follow out this consideration generally.

Observe the point at which the materialist stumbled. He inferred the eternity of matter from this undoubted axiom, "that nothing comes of nothing or goes into nothing." *De nihilo nihil, in nihilum nil posse reverti.* But this is an axiom of *created* things, and cannot be used when the question is of their *creation*.

Stanza V. p. 131.

*And when each thing with being was endued,
 The Spirit of God went in, and saw that it was good.*

"And God saw that it was good." That is, provided for its goodness, by impressing upon the Creation universally and individually its plastic soul or nature. The Septuagint has it, καὶ εἶδεν ὁ θεὸς ὅτι καλόν· which will bear this meaning if we understand εἶναι. According to the English translation, the last sentence of this chapter is only a general repetition of what has been before particularly asserted of each created thing : but mark the difference of the language in the Septuagint, καὶ εἶδεν ὁ θεὸς τὰ πάντα ὅσα ἐποίησε, καὶ ἰδὼν καλὰ λίαν· not ὅτι καλὰ λίαν as before. The English translation is not correct

according to the Septuagint, unless the words *that it was*, will bear that meaning too, *viz. that it should be*. The Latin versions have it variously. The Vulgate, which is reckoned the best, thus—*Et vidit Deus lucem quòd esset bona, et divisit, &c.*; in each case joining it immediately with what follows,* which materially affects the spirit of the words:—thus, *Et vidit Deus quòd esset bonum, et ait: germinet terra, &c. . . . Et vidit Deus quòd esset bonum, benedixitque eis, dicens: crescite, &c.* This mode of pointing renders the sense far more complete.

Every created body was originally impressed with an incorporeal plastic nature—a peculiar quality—a law immutable and inseparable. For instance, matter was indued with that internal and mysterious force, which we call gravitation; and its particles were further impressed with motion: the various elementary substances of which compound matter is made up, were infused with their particular chemical qualities, to act constantly by certain rules; every plant with its kind, every thing of flesh with its peculiar instinct; which, their inward principle, soul, or law, was made invariable, except according to some sufficient external causality. So that nothing in the universe can be named which bears not its distinct mark of the divine regard: every thing—brute, vegetable, and animate, has been breathed upon by a mysterious spirit, “the breath of the Lord’s mouth,”† which acts in it spontaneously, invariably, and unaccountably. These are the several energies, which always busy among themselves by their relative sympathies and antipathies, (the *φιλία* and *νεῖκος*, as I conceive, which Empedocles held to be the active principle in the world) keep up that continual change which we observe around us. So that, without insisting upon the immediate interference of the Deity in the present œconomy of things, we must acknowledge a first Cause and Continuator in every accident of the natural world.

How sublimely has Virgil touched upon all this, which was a part of the doctrine of Pythagoras: not invented by him, but learned in the East,‡ and taught in Italy?

* In the different editions of the Vulgate the words are differently pointed.

† Psalm xxxiii. 6.

‡ Probably of the Jewish priests at Sidon.

Principio cœlum ac terras, camposque liquentes,
 Lucentemque globum lunæ, Titaniaque astra,
 Spiritus intus alit, totamque infusa per artus
 Mens agitat molem, et magno se corpore miscet.

Stanza XXIII. p. 140.

Superior essence foils inferior beings :

Nec, si capere Dei naturam nostro ingenio non possumus, ideo talem esse naturam negandum est. Est enim id inferioris cujusque proprium, ut quæ se superiora atque excellentiora sunt capere non possit. Ne bestię quidem quid homo sit capiunt; multòque minus sciunt, quâ ratione homines respublicas instituant ac regant, astrorum cursus metiantur, mare navigent. Hæc enim omnia ipsarum captum superant. Atque ex hoc ipso homo, quippe supra bestias nobilitate naturæ constitutus, idque non a sese, inferre debet id, a quo superior bestiis est constitutus, non minus sese esse superius, quam ipse sit bestiis; ideoque esse aliquam naturam, quæ, utpote excellentior, sui captus modum excedat.

Grotius De Veritate Rel. Christ.

Stanza XLI. p. 149.

It is unnecessary to refer the reader to the curious book of Hartley, on Man. May not his general system be reconciled with what are held the first broad principles of that popular branch of Science, called Craniology?

Stanza LXXI. p. 164.

*and that nameless Name
 Of the four letters.*

The tetragrammaton. So was called by the Hebrews that name of God, which they supposed to have been given by Himself. Mr. Maurice says of it—"The Hebrews considered that name in such a sacred light, that they never pronounced it, and used the word Adonai instead of it."

“ It was indeed a name that ranked first among their profoundest Cabala ; a mystery sublime, ineffable, incommunicable. It was called Tetragrammaton, or the name of four letters, and these letters are, Jod, He, Vau, He, the proper pronunciation of which, from long disuse, is said to be no longer known to the Jews themselves. This awful name was first revealed by God to Moses from the centre of the burning bush ; and Josephus, who, as well as Scripture, relates this circumstance, evinces his veneration for it by calling it the name which his religion did not permit him to mention.* From this word the Pagan title of Iao and Jove is, with the greatest probability, supposed to have been originally formed, and in the Golden Verses of Pythagoras, there is an oath still extant to this purpose, *by him who has the four letters.*†”

Dr. Cudworth alludes to it as the origin of the name of *Jupiter*, *Jovis*, which he says, “ we may conclude to have been derived from that Tetragrammaton, or name of God, consisting of four consonants ; whose vowels (which it was to be pronounced with) though they be not now certainly known, yet must it needs have some such sound as this, either *Jovah*, or *Jahvoh*, or *’Iévw*, or *’Iáw*, or the like : and the abbreviation of this name was Jah.”‡ The Psalmist refers to this unutterable name, when he says, “ Praise him in his name Jah.”

* Ant. Jud. lib. 2. c. 5.

† Indian Antiquities, vol. iv. 8vo. 1800.

‡ Intellectual System, &c. p. 260, fol. 1678.

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